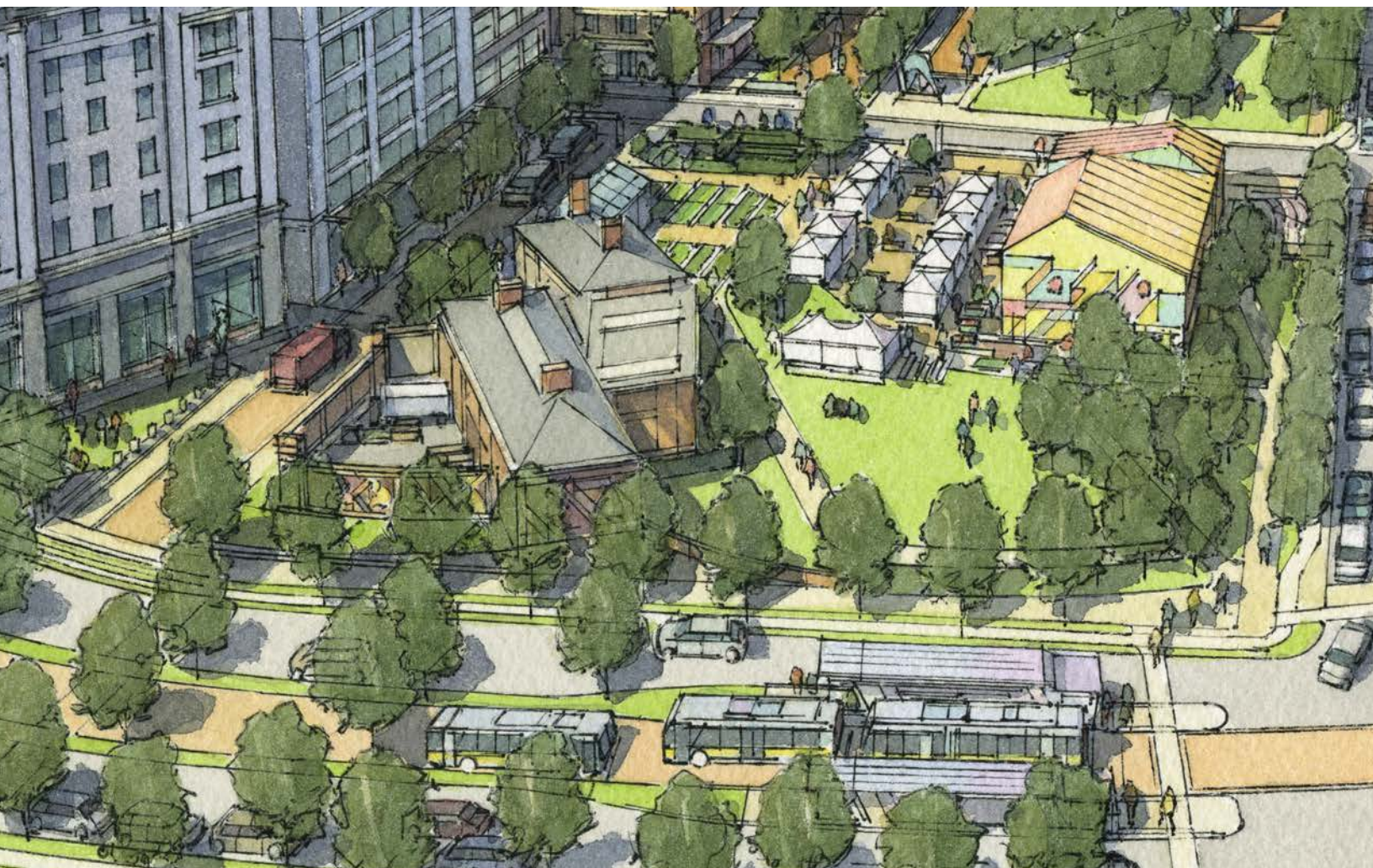




Brickbottom Neighborhood Plan



Mayor Katjana Ballantyne
Adopted September 5, 2024





Many passionate people are working on improving the Brickbottom neighborhood. This Neighborhood Plan would not be possible without local community residents and area stakeholders willing to offer their time and talent. This document writing and design is based on the principle that people ultimately create great spaces, not reports. This plan is a collaborative effort between community members, experts, and landowners.

Acknowledgements

Special Thanks To

The Brickbottom Artist Building Trustees and Residents
The Joy Street Studios Artists and Community
All the area workers, landowners, and residents who participated in our process

Elected officials

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne
Ward Councilor JT Scott

Consulting teams

Principle Group
TND Engineering
G. Kellogg & Co.

City staff

Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, including:
Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Division
Mobility Division
Housing Division
Housing Stability Division
Economic Development Division
Public Space and Urban Forestry Division
Engineering Department
Mayor's Office of Sustainability and Environment
Somerville Arts Council

Photo Credits

Chapter 1

Hutima

Chapter 2

Native Land Digital

Digital Commonwealth

McLean Hospital

Historic New England

Somerville Museum

1874 Hopkins Map, Plate A

Chapter 3

NorthRiver Company

Chapter 4

ArchDaily, Iwan Baan

The Dallas Arts District

Metro Eagle Rock

Perkins-Eastman

Artico + Flansburgh

Jiexin Packaing

Inhabitat

Schuchart

The Black Box

Vegas By Locals

Collins Woerman

Morris Adjmi Architects

ArchDaily

The New No. 2 via Flickr

Langan

MacroAir

Kantipur Themes

Carbon Direct

Multifamily Executive

Other

Principle Group

City of Somerville

Brickbottom Artists Association

Joy Street Artists

Plan Types & Characteristics

The Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development (OSPCD) works with city departments to create and carry out many kinds of plans and studies for the City of Somerville.

1 Comprehensive Plan

Somervision 2040 is Somerville's comprehensive master plan.



- Subject: Entire municipality and all topics
- Time length: 20-30 years
- Preparation time: 2-3 years
- Level of detail: Moderate

4 Specific Project Plan

The Union Square Streetscape Reconstruction Project and the Armory Master Plan are examples.



- Subject: Details service delivery goals and addresses quality of life; creates an implementation strategy
- Time length: 2-20 years
- Preparation time: 1-2 years
- Level of detail: Very high

2 System Plan

The Bicycle Network Plan and Urban Forest Management Plan are examples of system plans.



- Subject: Entire municipality for a specific subject matter
- Time length: 5-20 years
- Preparation time: 1-2 years
- Level of detail: High

5 Strategic or Action Plan

The Pollinator Action Plan, Cultural Capacity Plan, and Digital Equity Plan are examples.



- Subject: Details service delivery goals and addresses quality of life; creates an implementation strategy
- Time length: 1-5 years
- Preparation time: 3-12 mos
- Level of detail: Moderate

3 Area Plan

This plan for Assembly Square is an area plan. The neighborhood plans for Union Square, Brickbottom, and Davis Square and the station area plans for Gilman Square and Lowell Street are other examples of area plans.



- Subject: Place specific for local issues
- Time length: 5-10 years
- Preparation time: 6-12 mos
- Level of detail: High

6 Study

The Boardway Corridor Zoning Study, Parking & Curb Use Study, Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, and Housing Needs Assessment are examples of studies.



- Subject: Research and analysis of a specific topic; informs other planning
- Time length: Varies
- Preparation time: 1-12 mos
- Level of detail: Very high

Portions of this page were reproduced from Local Planning: Contemporary Principles and Practice published by the International City/County Management Association in cooperation with the American Planning Association.

Responsible Parties

Although OSPCD manages most plan production, several other elected officials, appointed boards or commissions, city departments, state agencies, or private parties share the responsibility for putting the plan into action.

Elected Officials

- **Mayor:** Prepares the annual municipal budget; determines the timing and type of the City's planning efforts.
- **City Council:** Approves how to spend or set aside money for different needs or projects; creates zoning rules for how land can be used; creates other local rules or laws.

Appointed Board or Commissions

- **Planning Board:** Approves the comprehensive plan; requires developers to lessen the impacts of new construction; provides recommendations to the City Council.
- **Urban Design Commission:** Provides building and public space design recommendations to property owners and the Planning Board.

City Departments

- **Arts Council:** Creates the City's arts and cultural plans; oversees local arts events and programs supporting local artists.
- **Capital Projects:** Oversees construction of buildings that the city owns.
- **Economic Development:** Creates and manages programs that help people who are looking for jobs and running small businesses; Division of OSPCD.
- **Engineering:** Oversees fixing the city's utilities, manages the program for fixing roads and sidewalks, and creates the final plans for roadway improvements.
- **Housing:** Administers the affordable housing program; prepares housing studies; Division of OSPCD.
- **Mobility:** Installs quick and minimally intrusive improvements to streets; develops concept designs for roadway

improvements; develops the City's transportation plans; administers the Transportation Demand Management program; Division of OSPCD.

- **Parking Department:** Regulates vehicular movement on public streets; installs and maintains all street signage, manages on-street parking permits and parking lots.
- **Planning, Preservation, & Zoning:** Develops the City's long-range comprehensive and area plans, develops zoning amendments, provides permit process administration to Boards & Commissions; Division of OSPCD.
- **Public Space & Urban Forestry:** Develops concept designs for streetscape improvements; develops the City's urban forest & public realm improvement plans; develops specific plans for city parks; Division of OSPCD.
- **Sustainability & Environment:** Develops the City's sustainability and climate change adaptation plans and studies; oversees the City's recycling programs.

State Agencies

- **MassDOT:** Oversees roads, public transit, aeronautics, and transportation licensing and registration in the state of Massachusetts.
- **MBTA:** Operates most public transportation services in Greater Boston, Massachusetts.

Private Parties

- **BlueBikes:** Operates the bike rental (sharing) system in Greater Boston, Massachusetts.
- **Property Owners:** Builds and maintains privately owned buildings; rents or leases space to residential and commercial tenants.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

1.	Introduction	14
	1.1 What is this Plan?	
	1.2 Area of Scope	
	1.3 Why Plan Now?	
2.	Plan Foundation	19
	2.1 A Brief History	
	2.2 Previous Planning	
	2.3 Brickbottom Today	
	2.4 Recent Changes	
	2.5 SomerVision: The Comprehensive Plan	
	2.6 Engagement Process	
	2.7 Community Feedback Summary	
3.	Vision for Brickbottom	44
	3.1 Opportunities	
	3.2 Priorities	
	3.3 Concerns	
4.	Plan Objectives	56
	4.1 Arts and Culture	
	4.2 Economic Development	
	4.3 Land Use and Urban Design	
	4.4 Mobility	
	4.5 Housing	
5.	Key Areas	92
	Area 1: Washington Street	
	Area 2: Joy Street	
	Area 3: Popular Street	
	Area 4: Chestnut Street	
	Area 5: Fitchburg and Linwood Streets	
6.	Supplemental	128
	6.1 Fiscal Impact Analysis	
	6.2 Implementation	

Executive Summary

The Brickbottom neighborhood in Somerville is poised for development due to recent infrastructure projects like the extension of the Green Line and Somerville Community Path. However, a shared vision is needed to ensure these developments create a vibrant and functional neighborhood that works for the community.

Currently, Brickbottom lacks key features like grocery stores, public spaces, and walkable streets. The plan proposes leveraging the existing artist community and creative economy to establish a unique identity for the neighborhood.

Challenges include the rail barrier separating Brickbottom from Inner Belt, long blocks unfriendly to pedestrians, and a lack of green space. Overcoming these obstacles will require collaboration with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MASSDOT)'s grounding of McGrath Highway project, and private landowners.

Assets include a strong artist presence, good public transportation access, and a distinct architectural character that can inform future development.



Community Engagement

The planning process prioritized extensive community engagement despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Residents, workers, and other stakeholders participated through virtual meetings, online surveys, phone consultations, and a neighborhood walk.

The process began with sharing data on existing conditions and then soliciting community input on challenges and opportunities. Open-ended discussions were held with a variety of groups, followed by online workshops to develop a shared vision. Illustrative drawings and narratives were created to help visualize potential outcomes, and then refined through iterative feedback loops. This collaborative approach ensured the final plan reflected the community's priorities.

Key Engagement Events

- Winter Worksheet (December 2020–January 2021)
- Visioning Workshop (April 7, 2021)
- Design Ideas Workshop (October 27, 2021)
- Open House (June 11, 2022)
- Neighborhood Meeting (July 8, 2024)

Community Priorities

1

Create a Complete Neighborhood

Provide safe access to essential goods & services, including varied housing, retail, public spaces, transportation, and public services. Prioritize walkable, bikeable environments.



2

Support Arts & Creative Uses

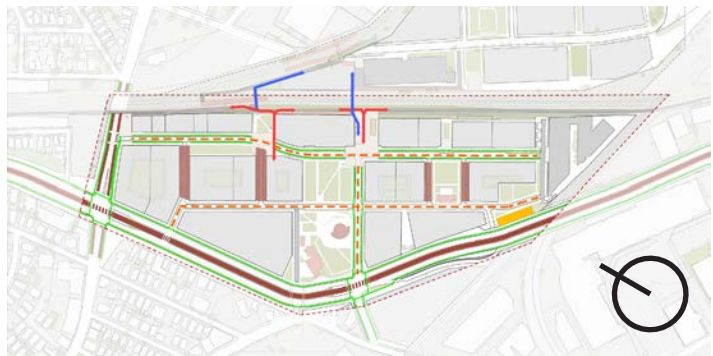
Enhance the existing artist and creative community, fostering a potential arts district.



3

Improve Access and Connectivity

Ensure safe and efficient movement for pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles, public transit, and deliveries. Improve connections to surrounding areas through infrastructure improvements and redesigned streetscapes.



4

Design Sustainably with a Pedestrian Focus

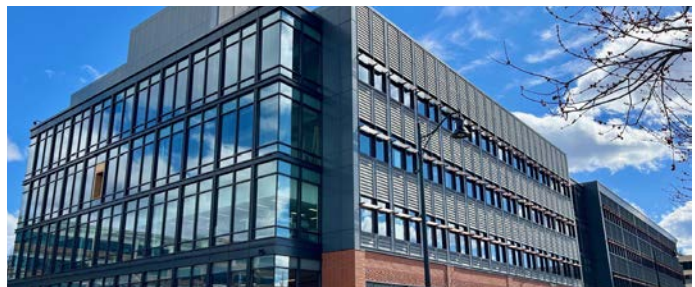
Prioritize human-centered design that considers both physical movement and user experience. Create walkable, welcoming spaces with long-term sustainability.



5

Support Economic Development

Foster a well-rounded business ecosystem with retail, art, industry, and research & development. Leverage the creative community to attract complementary businesses. Implement workforce development initiatives.



Plan Objectives

1

Arts and Culture

Brickbottom's redevelopment prioritizes fostering its vibrant arts scene and transforming it into a regional arts destination. This will involve preserving existing artist workspaces, adding new ones with specific needs in mind, and creating galleries, performance venues, and classrooms to showcase and teach artistic crafts. Public art installations throughout the neighborhood will further solidify its artistic identity, with opportunities for large-scale art festivals and cultural events. A dedicated arts district management organization will be established to advocate for artists, plan events, and market Brickbottom as an arts district. To ensure affordability, strategies like clustering creative spaces will be explored. Most importantly, artist participation in the planning process is crucial to cultivating a diverse, inclusive, and flourishing arts scene that stays true to Brickbottom's character.

2

Economic Development

Brickbottom's economic future hinges on a diverse business mix offering local jobs and daily services for residents. While recent growth in research and development businesses aligns with city goals, focus is needed to preserve the artist community facing displacement from rising costs and new construction. The plan proposes supporting artists as valuable small businesses through affordable studios, maker spaces, and marketing initiatives, fostering collaboration with other businesses. To achieve this, the City can streamline permitting for outdoor displays, explore incentive programs for local shops and restaurants, and consider zoning changes promoting active ground floor uses and artist spaces. Redevelopment will be gradual due to existing ownership, but the neighborhood can become an arts destination now through pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, greening initiatives, and artist-driven temporary uses like pop-up structures.

3

Land Use and Urban Design

Brickbottom has the potential to be a vibrant and complete, mixed-use neighborhood. However, it is crucial to address its current car-centric infrastructure and lack of open space. This can be done through prioritizing pedestrians through Complete Streets design, incorporating environmentally friendly practices like solar orientation and increased tree canopy, and creating a network of public spaces. The vision calls for a 20% dedication of land to civic spaces and parks, along with a development strategy that incorporates arts, economic development, and housing. This strategy should include office and research spaces for economic diversification, a range of residential uses, and commercial uses that complement the existing artist workspaces and light industrial areas. Finally, building and urban design should respect Brickbottom's artistic identity and "funky vibe" while allowing for a diversity of styles within the industrial character.

4

Mobility

Brickbottom's isolation is a key challenge, with limited connections that discourage walking and biking. This plan outlines solutions like improved crossings, protected bike lanes, and limitations on car-centric design. By collaborating with MassDOT and the MBTA, the neighborhood aims to create a safe and multi-modal transportation network with a potential commuter rail station, while promoting alternative modes of transportation through parking limitations and strategic development.

5

Housing

Brickbottom can significantly contribute to SomerVision2040's housing goals by offering artist housing, live-work units, and flexible layouts catering to different preferences. High-density development near the East Somerville MBTA Station will create a complete, mixed-use environment with a range of unit sizes to foster a vibrant and connected community with easy access to shops, eateries, workspace, and civic spaces.

Key Areas

1

Key Area 1: Washington Street

Brickbottom's main entrance at Washington and Joy Streets is slated for a transformation. A new plaza with public art will greet visitors arriving by train, bus, bike, or foot, providing clear access to the Green Line station and Community Path. Crosswalks will be improved, and the intersection's design will consider potential Silver Line extension plans. Upper-story residences near the station will be paired with ground-floor active uses catering to residents and plaza visitors. Setbacks from the street will allow for wider sidewalks, bike lanes, and street trees.



2

Key Area 2: Joy Street

Joy Street is envisioned as a high-density corridor with mixed-use buildings, featuring courtyards or following a long and narrow design to maximize space. The street itself will be redesigned as a complete street with enhanced pedestrian and cyclist priority. A new greenway or public space is proposed at the curve of Joy Street, incorporating public art. New cross streets connecting to Linwood Street are suggested to improve connectivity, with buildings on that block designed to integrate with the new green space. Finally, a more direct pedestrian connection to the Green Line station from within Brickbottom is recommended.



3

Key Area 3: Poplar Street

Poplar Street is envisioned as a vibrant, green main street with public spaces, art-focused businesses, and a connection to the community path. ArtFarm at the beginning of the street offers space for urban agriculture, performances, and a pump station. A new plaza with public art is planned for the other end, providing permanent access to the Green Line, and a potential central park could connect the two, creating a linear green corridor and event space. Temporary art and retail uses in shipping containers or similar structures could activate the area during redevelopment.



4

Key Area 4: Chestnut Street

This central block of Brickbottom should be redeveloped with a mix of arts and creative uses with lower building heights compared to areas closer to the Green Line station. A new public square and pocket plaza with public art, possible water features, and seating amenities are planned to improve pedestrian experience and create a respite area. Chestnut Street will be redesigned as a complete street with bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and trees to enhance the pedestrian experience.

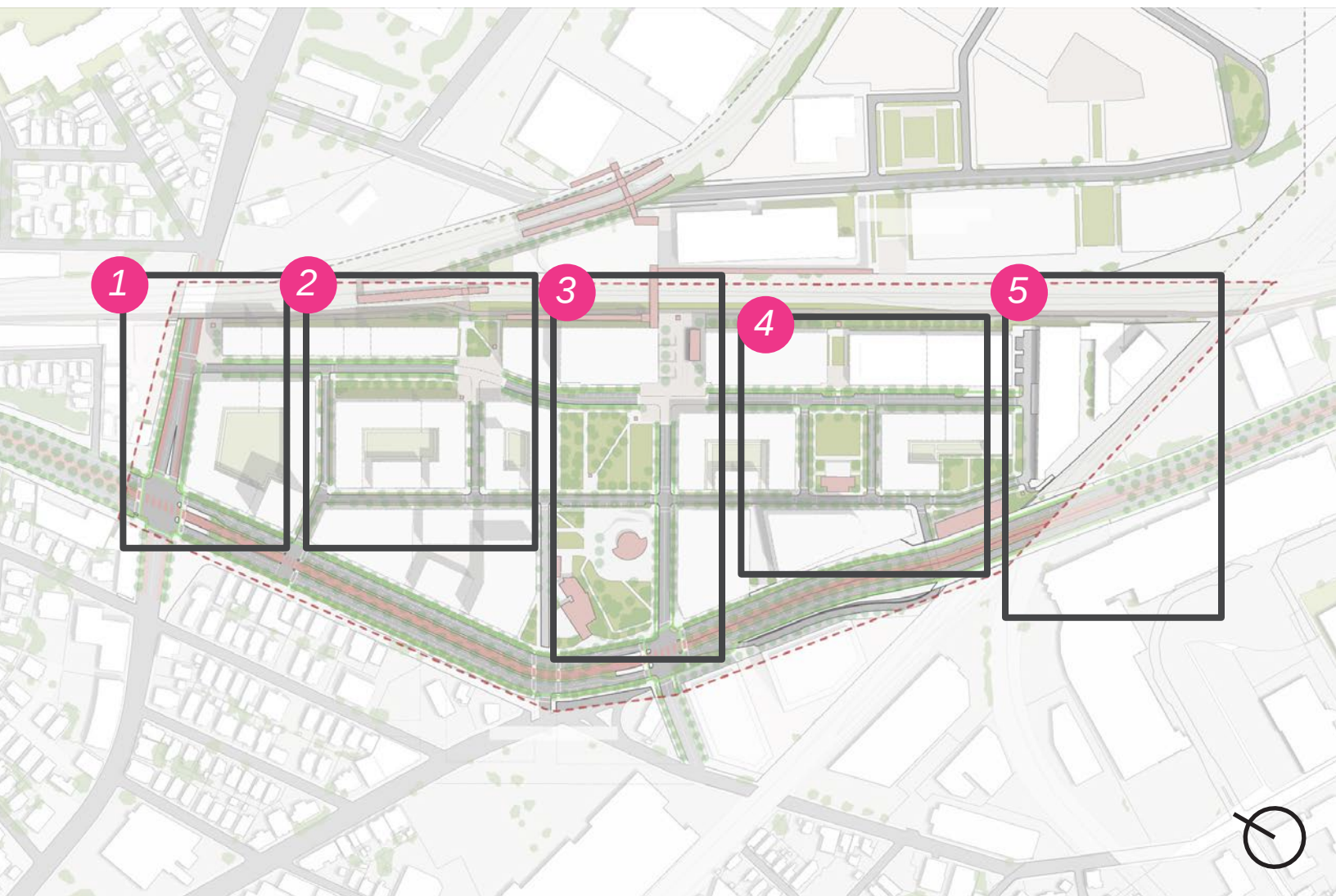


5

Key Area 5: Fitchburg and Linwood Streets

Brickbottom Artist Building, the neighborhood's sole residential building, sits along the southern tip of Fitchburg Street, a unique area with preserved cobblestone pavement. Squires Bridge creates a barrier for pedestrians due to its narrow sidewalk and neglected staircase. The upcoming McGrath transformation offers an opportunity to improve this connection by realigning Somerville Avenue Extension and potentially creating a more pedestrian-friendly route to and from the residential area.





Brickbottom Key Areas

1. Washington Street & Joy Street
2. Joy Street
3. Poplar Street
4. Chestnut Street
5. Fitchburg & Linwood



1. Introduction

1.1 What is This Plan?

1.2 Area of Scope

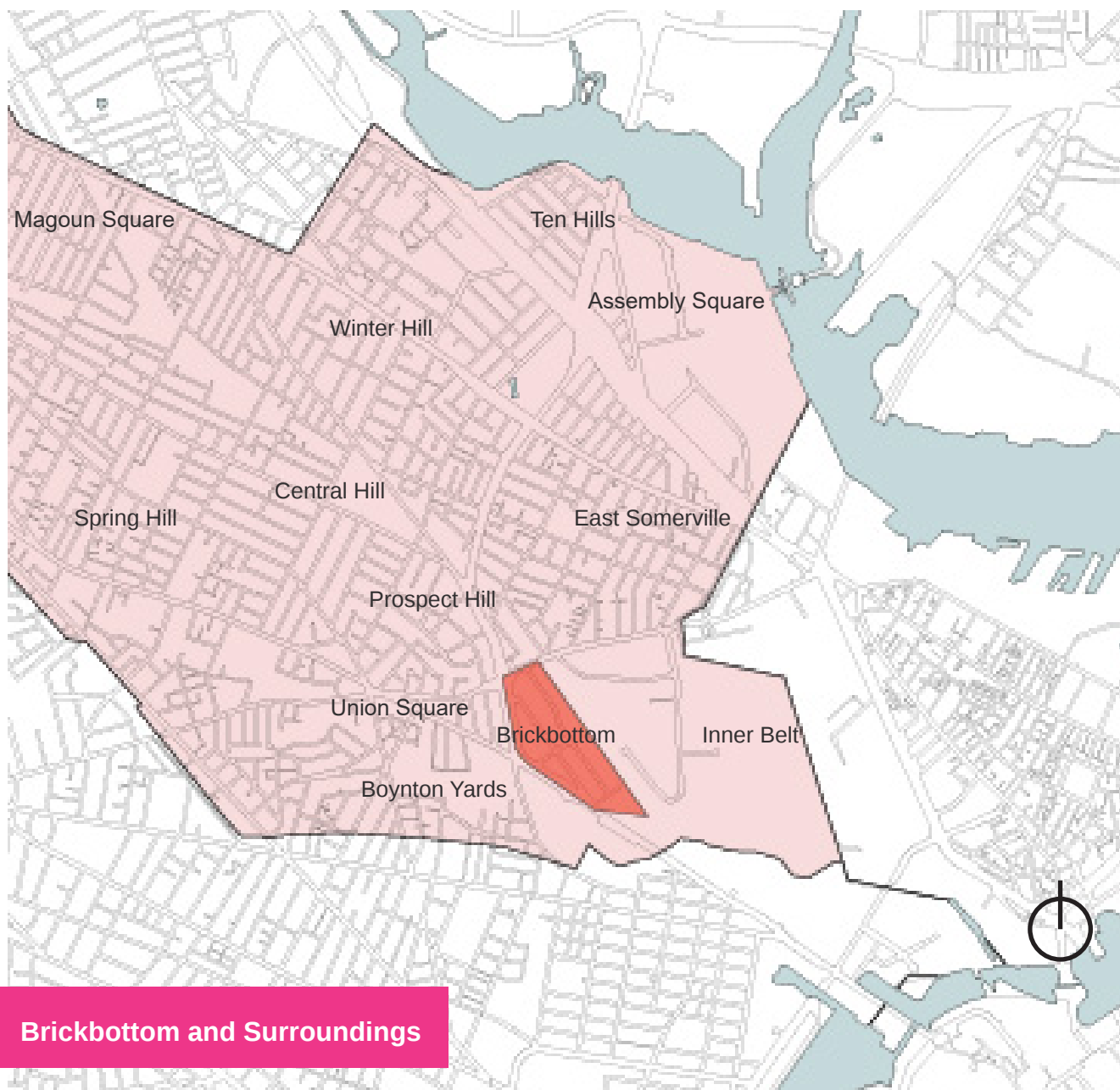
1.3 Why Plan Now?



1.1 What is this plan?

Neighborhood plans are a type of area plan focusing on a distinct neighborhood of Somerville with its own social history and physical features. These types of plans provide background information about the neighborhood and address a full breadth of topics, including land use, economic activity, housing, mobility, public space, and sustainability. Neighborhood plans help translate the goals and policies of city-wide plans, such as SomerVision2040,

to a neighborhood scale and provide recommendations that guide future policy, program, and regulatory decision making. Somerville's neighborhood plans also help the community to establish a vision for how the physical form of future development may take place through maps and illustrations that depict desired development patterns. This visioning helps to establish shared values and objectives for the future while identifying issues that will need further work.



Brickbottom and Surroundings

1.2 Area of Scope

Brickbottom is located in the southeast end of the City adjacent to East Somerville to the north, Twin City to the south, Union Square to the west, and Inner Belt to the east.

The scope of this plan includes the land located:

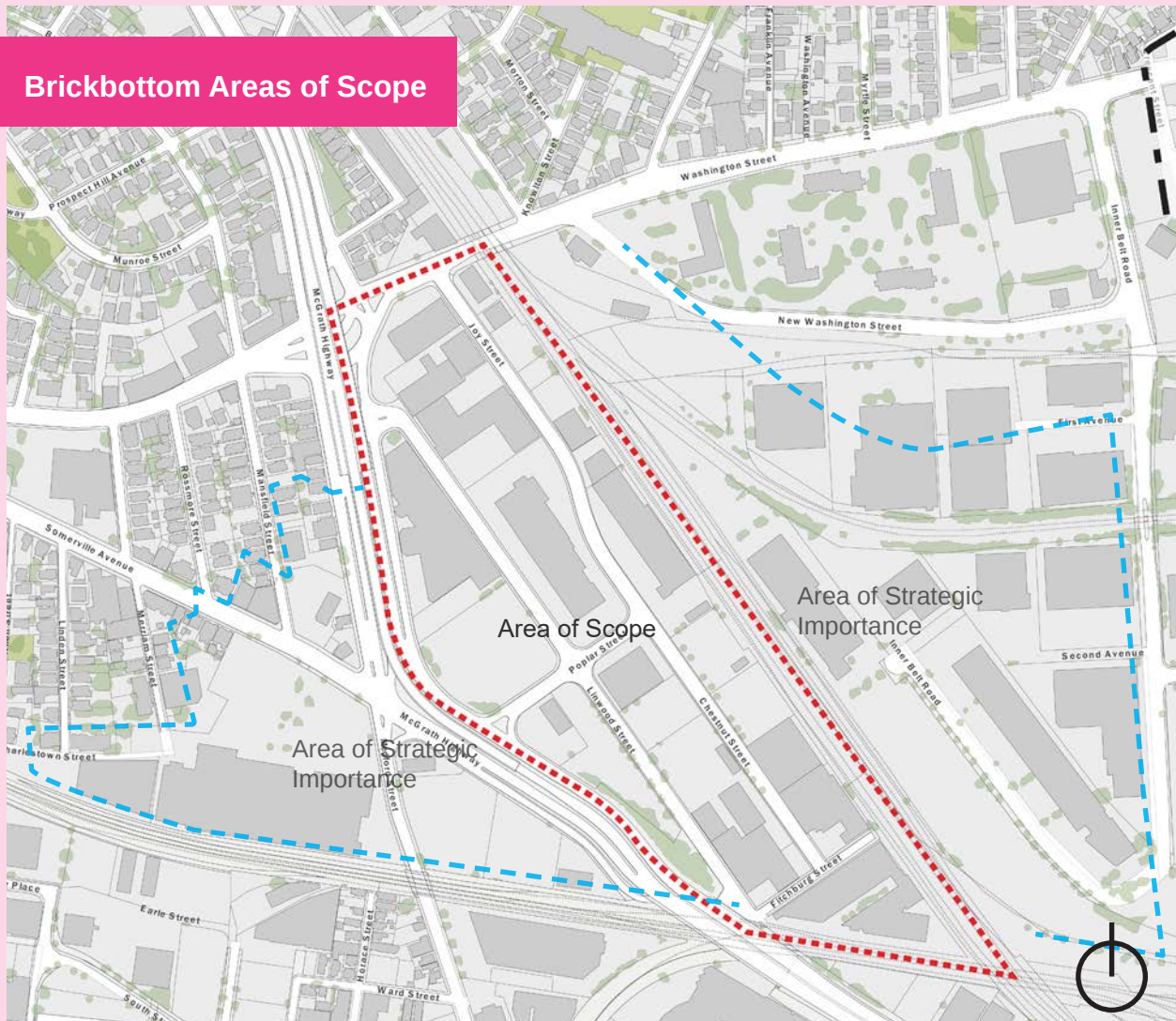
- Southwest of the Green Line Extension (GLX) Medford/Tufts branch alignment
- North of the Fitchburg Railroad alignment
- East and northeast of McGrath Highway
- Southeast of Washington Street

(These are the parcels shown on the City of Somerville Assessors Map 94, Blocks A, B,

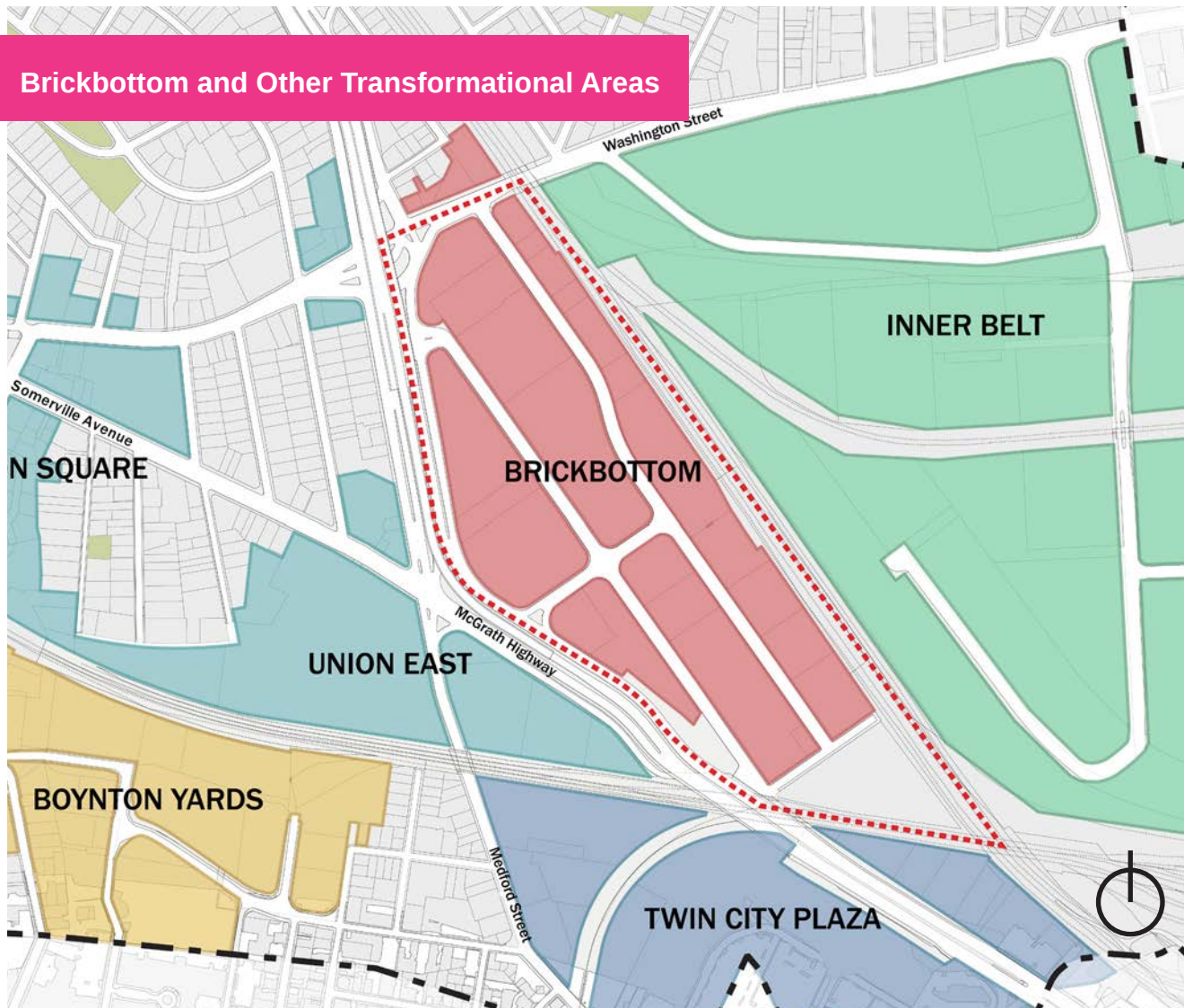
and C; Map 112, Blocks A, B, and C; Map 115, Block C).

Two additional areas were included in the study area to determine where connections to Brickbottom were possible, including the land directly east of the GLX right-of-way within Inner Belt and the parcels on the west side of McGrath Highway, as referenced from the Milk Square Urban Design Framework. These areas are strategically important, given their relevance to the main goals and ideas presented in SomerVision 2040 for improved connectivity to transit and pedestrian safety.

Brickbottom Areas of Scope



Brickbottom and Other Transformational Areas



1.3 Why Plan Now?

A shared vision for the neighborhood must be defined before development accelerates throughout the area on undeveloped and underdeveloped sites.

Brickbottom has seen a significant wave of recent changes that has brought development pressure to the area, including:

- Green Line Extension East Somerville Station (MBTA)
- Extension of the community path
- Construction of the Poplar Street Pump Station and the development of ArtFarm
- 100 Chestnut Commercial Building

Establishing a vision includes determining the character of neighborhood to be created, the sense of place to evoke, and the physical and social infrastructure required to support it. Beyond the long-range planning and visioning process, opportunities for City guidance and community feedback also exist in each development process. Still, to achieve the best outcomes there needs to be a big-picture vision that considers the entire ecosystem of private sites and public infrastructure throughout the neighborhood.



Ariel view of Brickbottom.



2. Plan Foundation

2.1 A Brief History

2.2 Previous Planning

2.3 Brickbottom Today

2.4 Recent Changes

2.5 SomerVision: The Comprehensive Plan

2.6 Engagement Process

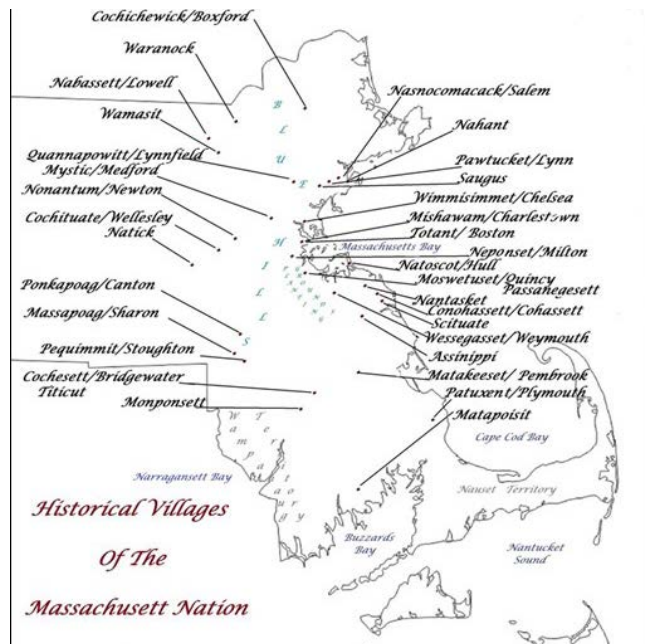
2.7 Community Feedback Summary



2.1 A Brief History

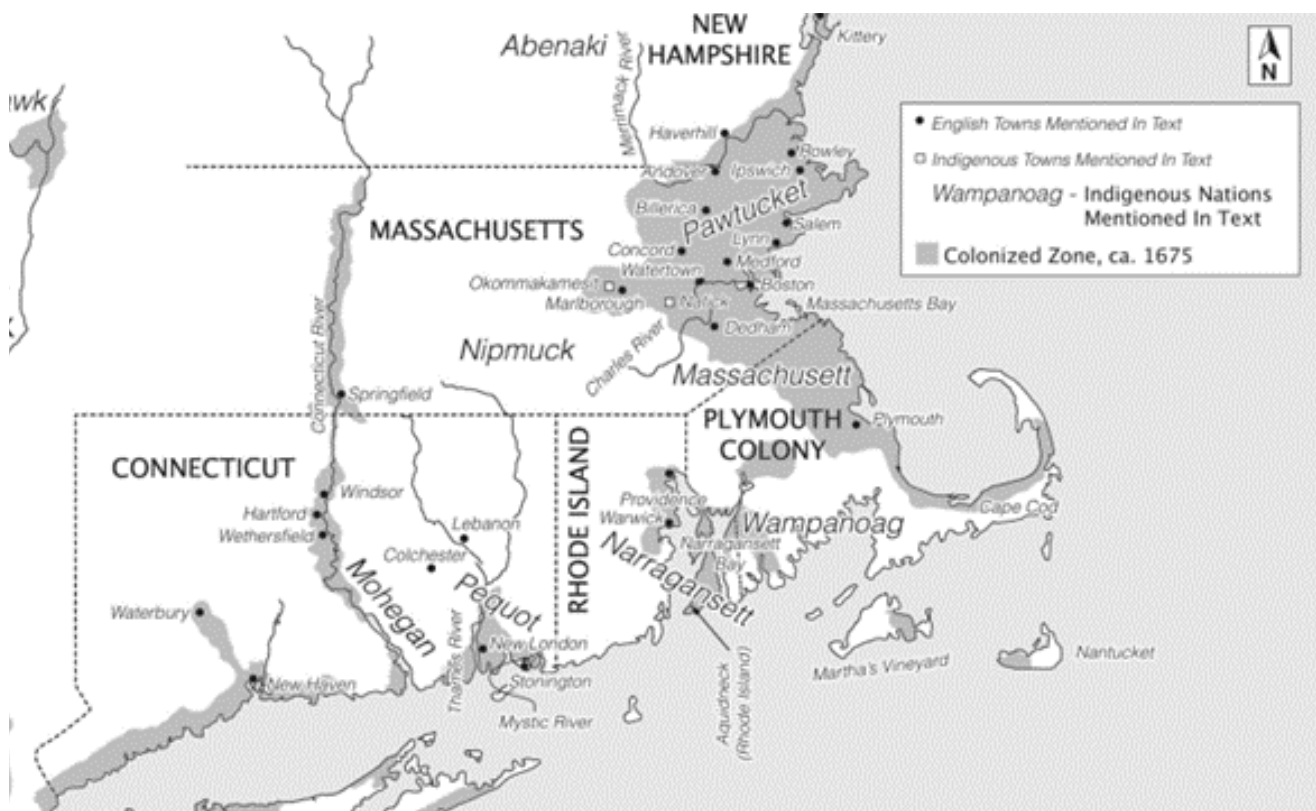
Long prior to European contact, all of present-day Somerville and the surrounding area formed part of the territory of the Massachusetts and Pawtucket, indigenous peoples who were culturally and linguistically allied with the larger Algonquin nation which stretched into present-day Canada. Though difficult to envision today, the pre-colonial Brickbottom area formed part of a pristine landscape whose vast waterways, flora, and fauna supported indigenous settlements in terms of trade, transportation, farming, and hunting/gathering.

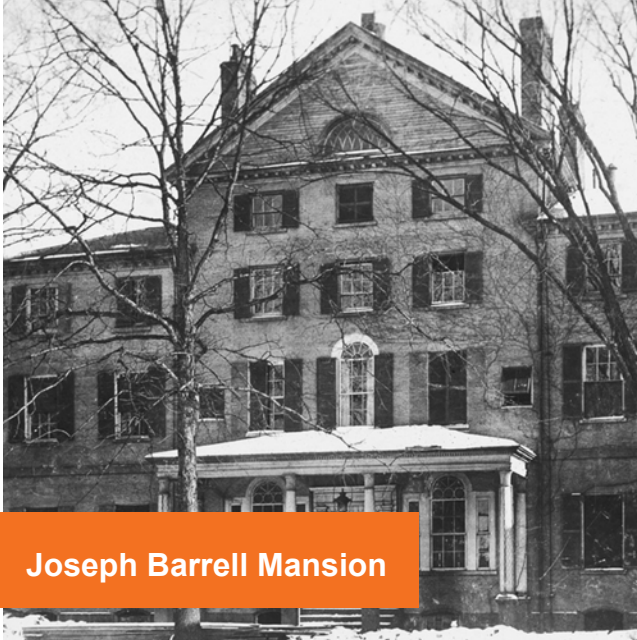
As the 1600s brought colonization by the English, these indigenous peoples were dispossessed of their land through disease, warfare and treaties, along with forced removal. As indigenous communities were displaced, the English imposed their own ideas of land ownership and land use on the area. Fully colonized by the English by 1675 over the next few centuries this area would transform from rural and pastoral to highly industrialized.



Map of historical villages of the Massachusett and Pawtucket peoples (above).

Map of English settlement and traditional territories of indigenous communities in 1675 (below).





Joseph Barrell Mansion

From the colonial period until 1842, Brickbottom, as with the rest of Somerville, was part of Charlestown. Agricultural endeavors in the 1700s began to gradually transform the area with farms and large homesteads steadily dotting the landscape. Capitalizing on the clay-filled soil, businessmen established the brickyards for which the area is named. A major post-Revolutionary development in this area was the opening of one of the first psychiatric facilities in the United States. The “Asylum for the Insane” (later McLean Hospital) opened in 1818 at the former 18th century estate of Joseph Barrell. The bucolic surroundings and tranquil atmosphere of the area were considered essential to the treatment of people living with behavioral health issues at the time.



McLean Hospital, post 1842

As the 19th century progressed, pastoral Brickbottom rapidly gave way to industrialization. Factories, warehouses, stockyards, slaughterhouses, and other businesses crowded the area. Grand Junction Railroad, Boston & Lowell, and Fitchburg Railroad ferried raw materials and finished goods to and from the area.

While this industrialization brought economic growth and employment to the community and sent locally made products around the nation, it also brought challenging times to Brickbottom. Factories and coal-powered locomotives belched smoke and deposited black soot into the neighborhood. The noises and smells from the stockyards and slaughterhouses such as those of the Charles H. North Meat Packing Plant filled the air. The stench

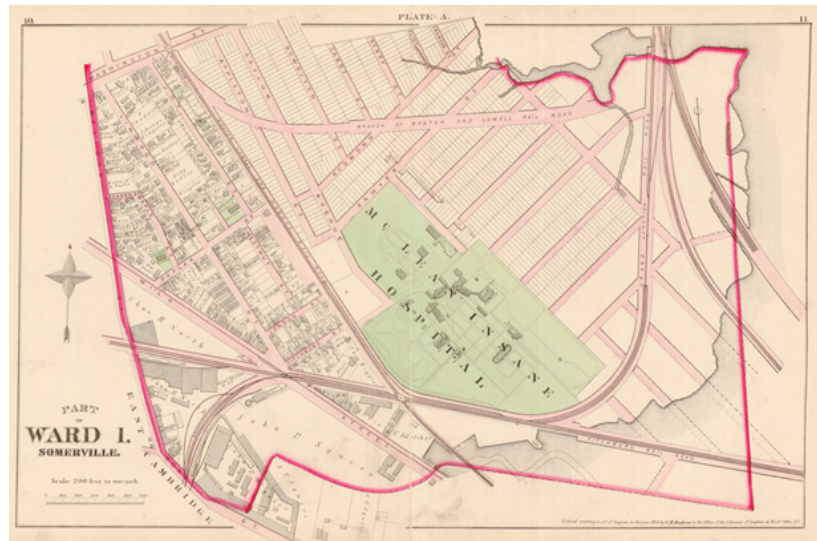
of decomposing animal carcasses and other slaughterhouse waste dumped into the nearby tidal Miller's River created such a fetid atmosphere that in 1874 the river was filled in to eliminate this problem. Cheap housing, often overcrowded, was constructed near the rails, factories, and slaughterhouses to house area workers and their families. Occupants were typically economically disadvantaged and often newer immigrants. The bucolic atmosphere gone by the later 19th century, even McLean Hospital decamped to Belmont in 1895.

The 20th-century brought additional change and eventual decline to Brickbottom; the one-time industrial boom gradually slid into bust as the century progressed. Factories

The grounds at the McClean Hospital with industrial buildings and smokestacks of industrialized Somerville in the background.



1874 Hopkins map, plate A showing Grand Junction Railroad, Boston & Lowell, and Fitchburg Railroads, which brought goods to this area.



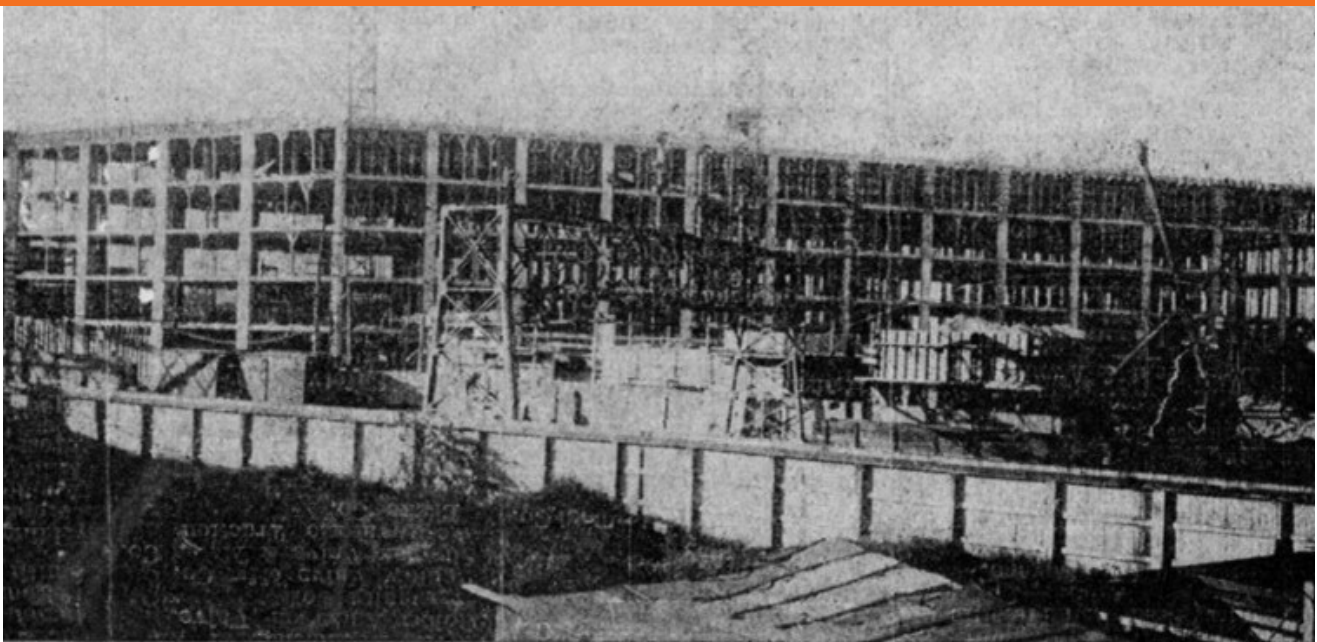
and slaughterhouses closed, and jobs were lost or shifted elsewhere. 1907 saw the construction of the Somerville Municipal Incinerator in the neighborhood. In 1925, the neighborhood was bisected by the construction of the Northern Artery. By the late 1940s/1950s, the area was considered by municipal leaders as being in such decline that the City pursued takings and redevelopment through urban renewal. Though Brickbottom residents vigorously opposed the proposed taking of their homes, in 1952 the Somerville Redevelopment

Authority (SRA) declared the area blighted under urban renewal and razed the area's houses and displaced over 300 families in an effort to build a modern industrial park. Eventually the Northern Artery was replaced by the elevated McGrath Highway, completely cutting this neighborhood off from the rest of the City.

The community activism shown by Brickbottom residents in the 1950s rose to the fore again in the 1980s. Artists had been moving into the area in search of affordable live-work space. In the 1980s, a group of artists collectively purchased two of the former A&P Tea Company buildings in Brickbottom, including the former bakery, constructed in 1920. The buildings were transformed into live/work condominiums for members of the Brickbottom Artists Association, a thriving creative community that has helped bring vitality back to this once-dismissed area of the City.



Construction of the bakery building for the A&P Tea Company in Brickbottom, 1920.





Old neighborhood character in Brickbottom. Triple-deckers with commercial ground floors. Poplar Street and Somerville Avenue circa 1925.

2.2 Previous Planning

Somerville has long recognized Brickbottom's potential and engaged in multiple planning initiatives to envision its future. Residents shared their time and energy contributing to those initiatives, and these previous plans and documents were studied and used as source material, seeking to build upon and refine their findings and recommendations, in this process. Below is an overview of each of those efforts.

Inner Belt & Brickbottom Plan 2013, Goody Clancy

The Inner Belt & Brickbottom planning process (2010–2012) was the City's first attempt at transformational area planning. Created in collaboration with the Good Clancy planning firm, residents, workers, and property owners, it addressed Brickbottom's longstanding needs: improving connectivity with Inner Belt and the block subdivision, and to the community path and providing more civic and open spaces. The community process was ongoing concurrently with SomerVision2030, and due to timing, the process did not incorporate many SomerVision goals, policies, and actions. Consequently, it was not adopted. Many tasks and solutions that were presented in that document were updated and integrated into this plan where relevant.

Making Brickbottom: 2015 Exploratory Neighborhood Plan, MIT

In 2014, a team of graduate students from MIT worked with city staff to develop a plan to inform potential development within the Brickbottom area. Prompted by a discussion to ground McGrath Highway and by the extension of the MBTA Green Line, the goal of the class project was to work with the community to envision the area's future after those changes. Through public workshops, academic research, and concept development, the MIT team put forth an ambitious vision. While the document proposed significant residential and commercial development for the area, it gave special attention to creating new civic spaces. It recognized the opportunity for a gateway at Joy Street and a connection between Poplar Street and the community path. Many of those design ideas from the students were incorporated into this plan.



Union Square Neighborhood Plan

Adopted for the adjacent area of Union Square, the plan includes ideas relevant to Brickbottom.

The plan calls for constructing a public square at the intersection of Somerville Avenue and the to-be-grounded McGrath Highway, dubbed Milk Square. This would serve as a pivotal connection between Union Square and Brickbottom. It also called for Poplar and Medford Streets to be realigned creating the southern side of the envisioned Milk Square along the urban boulevard of the former McGrath Highway.

UNION SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



HR&A Market Study

In 2020, the city commissioned HR&A advisors for a market analysis to better understand the future development potential and market environment in Brickbottom and its surrounding areas. As this was completed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, many of the findings may no longer be true -- however, the basic demand for housing has not changed. The first significant finding in the HR&A report is that strong recent residential growth is expected to continue driving demand. Somerville has a large population between 18 and 34 years of age, a demographic expected to seek home-ownership opportunities soon. Additionally, a large and growing population between 65 and 74 may seek out different housing unit sizes that provide support services for the elderly.

Despite significant development, housing demand has grown faster than supply, driving down vacancy. HR&A expects market demand in Brickbottom would support building about 400 to 625 housing units.

The area's desirability for more residential development will be significantly higher when the planned MassDOT McGrath Boulevard project is complete and the current highway is transformed into at-grade boulevard.

Compared to other Massachusetts communities or the country overall, a larger proportion of Somerville's population is in a professional field, including technical services, life sciences, or the scientific and education fields, which also impacts the type of housing demand.

The study found that demand for between 525,000 and 700,000 square feet of life-sciences and light-industrial development exists in Brickbottom, corresponding to about 2,100–2,800 jobs. The study also found strong spending potential within the local watershed in and around Brickbottom, especially given the potential for future high-density housing development. While regional retail demand is limited, the anticipated new residents and employees will provide sufficient demand for local retail goods and services, restaurants, and amenities. This plan proposes that creating an arts district offering many ways to enjoy music, art, and performances could make Brickbottom a regional destination, generating pedestrian activity and driving up the local demand for retail and dining. The current trend of light industrial uses moving out of Boston's core metro area has left a shortage of available spaces in that category. Brickbottom offers an opportunity to provide compact spaces for uses like art and music studios, test kitchens, fabrication spaces, and artisanal manufacturing woven into mixed-use neighborhood urban fabric.

2.3 Brickbottom Today

Brickbottom is primarily auto oriented, which is at odds with current residents' needs and SomerVision's goals. Given its location, this neighborhood is brimming with new opportunities and could become an incredible place to walk, bike, live, work, and visit. However, Brickbottom lacks several urban components for a healthy, vibrant, and active neighborhood. There are no places to purchase food, no public spaces, and a very limited housing supply. Current and future residents and employees of all businesses in the area would greatly benefit from the addition of critical services such as banks,

healthcare providers, groceries, and retail stores.

The neighborhood presently has assets in art education, creative communities, fabricators, and trade workers, which can be used as a foundation to build a vibrant local economy. A focus on this pattern of economic development would differentiate the neighborhood and contribute to Somerville's diverse businesses and job opportunities.



Neon Williams, local neon art work, located at the end of Poplar Street and the intersection with Joy and Chestnut Streets.

Brickbottom Artist Building, Fitchburg Street



Challenges

Rail Barrier

The train tracks create a significant physical barrier, separating Brickbottom from Inner Belt. Multiple engineering and safety concerns exist when crossing the train tracks. Some suggestions are made in this plan but the matter will take further study and coordination with the MBTA along with property owners across the tracks in Inner Belt.

Long Blocks

The current block lengths make producing a walkable or mixed-used neighborhood difficult. These blocks must be modified with new street connections to make more comfortable pedestrian distances. Smaller block lengths allow for more varied paths of travel and increased distribution of all types of traffic.

Lack of Green Space

Other than Artfarm, Brickbottom lacks green space. The City does not own land in the area, and larger spaces are difficult to acquire due to the lack of availability

and the expense. Creating new open space will require extensive negotiations with landowners during the implementation phase.

McGrath Highway

While Washington Street connects Brickbottom to Union Square underneath the existing elevated roadway, the experience for pedestrians and bicyclists is unpleasant. Until the state initiative of converting McGrath Highway into a boulevard moves forward, it presents a major challenge to improving the safety and walkability of Brickbottom.

Lack of Amenities

The lack of a school, usable parks, community center, and other amenities or services in the area presents a challenge to expanding the residential population. Some of these services may eventually be offered in the neighborhood by the private development. Others, like schools, will be offered nearby, but it must be ensured that they are easily accessible from Brickbottom by bicycle or on foot.

Assets

Established Artist Community

The artist community formed by the combination of Joy Street Studios and Brickbottom Artist Building gives the neighborhood a great base to build upon.

Mass Transit

The Green Line and the community path

provide mobility choices that are not possible in many other neighborhoods.

Character

The architectural material and features of the existing buildings provide a good foundation to establish design guidelines for future development.





View of the current conditions of Poplar Street looking towards McGrath Highway.

ArtFarm's Progress

Beginning in 2015, ArtFarm was conceived as a unique urban space bringing together residents and visitors. After strong support from community members and the Somerville Arts Council, the previous Mayor Joseph Curtatone committed to making 10 Poplar Street, a former waste transfer station, ArtFarm's permanent home.

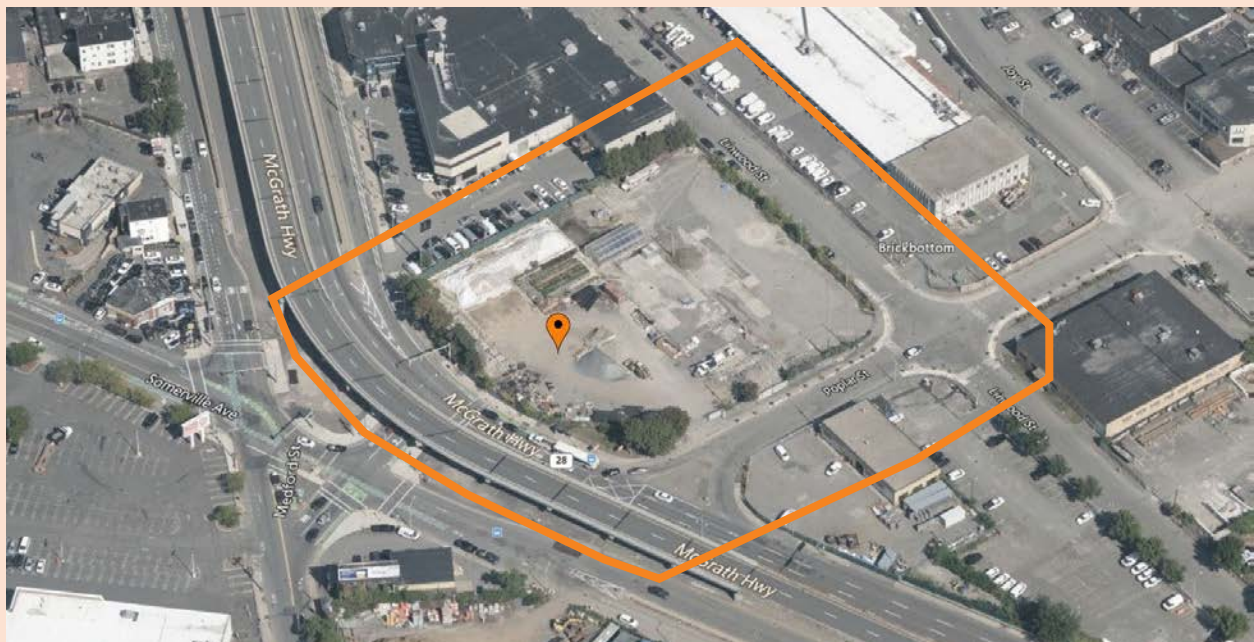
The site was an urban agriculture laboratory designed to foster community engagement and creativity. The vision included a park, urban agriculture site, and community center for performance and cultural and art exhibit spaces. ArtFarm is essential to the vision of Brickbottom's future.

In 2021, the Somerville Engineering Division unveiled a holistic site concept to address flooding issues incorporating the Poplar Street Pump Station into the overall ArtFarm concept, allowing ArtFarm to expand beyond earlier concepts. The Pump Station project is developing part of the ArtFarm site to provide critical stormwater management infrastructure in an underground tank and to construct

a building for the necessary mechanical equipment. This project is part of a series of infrastructure improvements underway to relieve flooding, boost climate change preparedness, and reduce combined sewer overflows in the city.

The City's recent work has focused on subterranean infrastructure of the stormwater management facility and related utilities. Most key infrastructure design challenges have been addressed and as of Spring 2023 site clearing and large-scale soil excavation was complete and the area is ready for the installation of the underground tank. This early phase of work must be completed to unlock other parts of the overall site development. Once the major infrastructure elements have been installed and commissioned, work on ArtFarm's civic space can begin in earnest.

You can learn more and stay up to date on this project here: voice.somervillema.gov/poplar-artfarm.



While it is often difficult to see improvements that happen slowly, change is happening. Brickbottom's connection to the larger Boston metropolitan area has improved significantly through mass transit and cycling infrastructure, with the opening of the MBTA Green Line station in 2022 and the community path extension in 2023. These connections unlock significant development potential in Brickbottom and the surrounding area. Through a series of mitigation conditions tied to the development of 100 Chestnut, an additional temporary connection to the Community Path and the East Somerville Station has been provided in the center of the neighborhood at the intersection of Poplar and Joy Streets. The development of 100 Chestnut Street has completed construction and is occupied, bringing many jobs to Brickbottom. While new investment is welcome, ensuring all projects are well integrated into the neighborhood is essential. The development of 100 Chestnut is the beginning of positive

changes in the public realm to produce greener, safer, and more walkable streets. The streetscape installed as part of the project was coordinated with multiple City divisions, and the neighborhood residents, to ensure that the design met appropriate standards and will eventually be extended the complete length of Chestnut and Joy Streets. The development team was obligated to provide an interim roadway level bikeway. Through discussions between the residents and the City's Mobility team, the development team has provided funding for the City to complete this work in 2025.

There are also a few projects that are not installed yet but are certain to be completed over the next few years. As part of the ArtFarm project, Poplar Street will be completely rebuilt and is currently funded via the City's Capital Investment Plan. The MassDOT Grounding McGrath project has received Federal funding with anticipated construction to begin in 2027.





Rendering of the 100 Chestnut Street comercial building, Brickbottom's recently completed life science and reseach & development building.

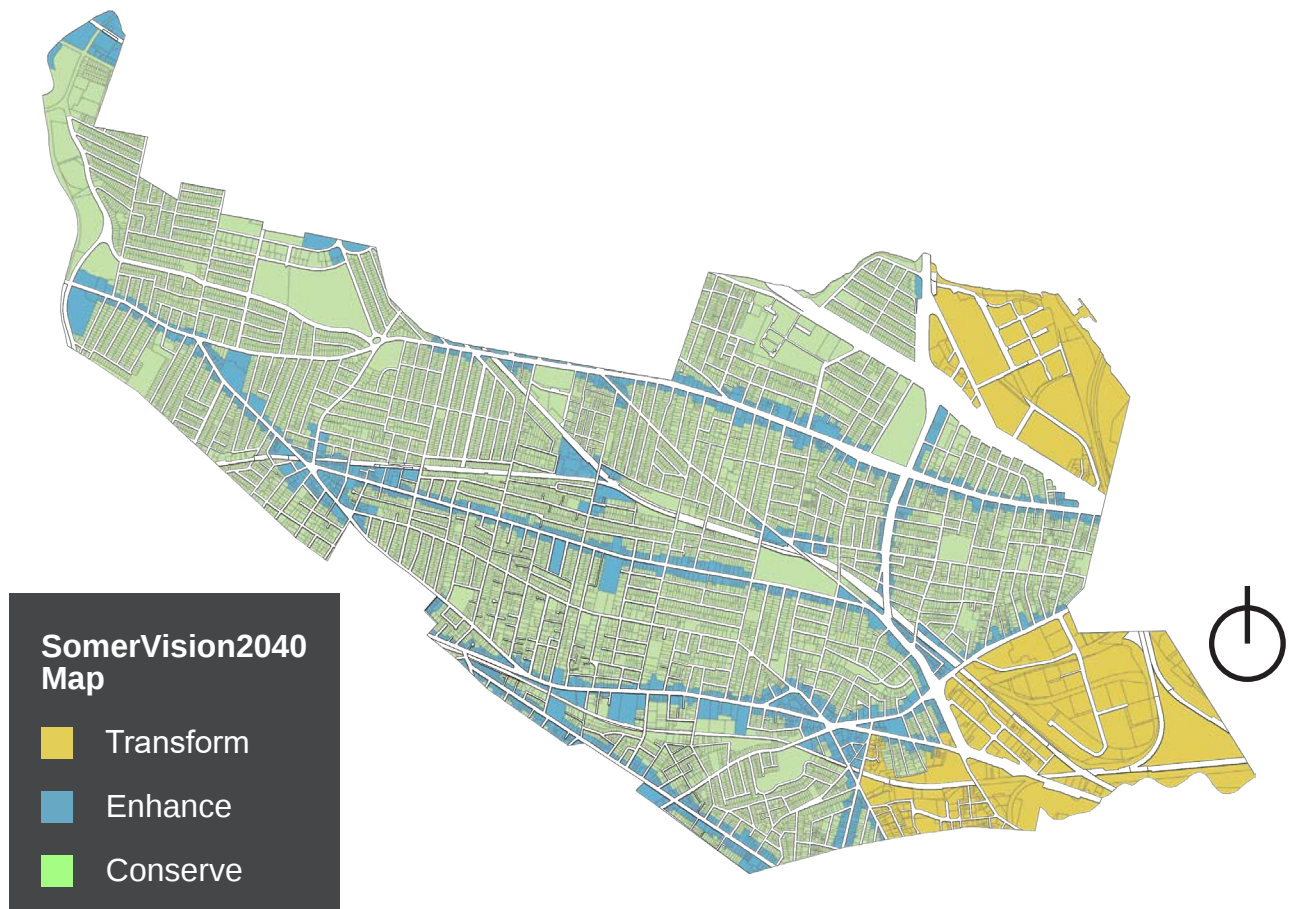
2.5 SomerVision: The Comprehensive Plan

The SomerVision2040 Comprehensive Plan provides valuable guidance by recommitting to long-held community values of diversity, inclusion, growth, accessibility, sustainability, and innovation.

Brickbottom is defined as a transform area in SomerVision2040, making it one of the key areas in the city for achieving SomerVision goals. Equity is one of our central community values. Putting diversity and inclusion at the core of our policies is how we live up to our ideals and ensure our community remains safe, vibrant, and supportive of all as growth occurs. The comprehensive plan calls for these transformational areas to host much of the economic development of the city and

become regional employment centers that offer a wide range of high-quality jobs. These areas can also help the City achieve critical housing goals by increasing high-density housing stock near mass transit, addressing housing shortage without worsening car traffic.

By creating thoughtfully designed, pedestrian-focused development, these auto-oriented and former industrial sites can be turned into dynamic, mixed-use, and transit-oriented districts that serve as economic engines to support many of the innovative programs throughout the city.



Somerville's Shared Values

- 1 Protect and foster the **DIVERSITY** of our people, culture, housing and economy.
- 2 Celebrate the unique character of our neighborhoods and the strength of our **COMMUNITY** as expressed in our history, cultures and vibrant civic engagement.
- 3 Invest in the **GROWTH** of a resilient economic base that is centered around transit, generates a wide variety of job opportunities, creates an active daytime population, supports independent local businesses, and secures fiscal self-sufficiency.
- 4 Promote a dynamic urban streetscape that embraces public transportation, reduces car dependence, and is **ACCESSIBLE**, inviting and safe for all pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.
- 5 Build a **SUSTAINABLE** future through climate leadership, balanced transportation, engaging civic spaces, exceptional educational opportunities, improved health, varied and affordable housing options, and the responsible use of our natural resources.
- 6 Affirm our responsibility to current and future generations through continued **INNOVATION** in business, technology, education, arts and government.

You can learn more about SomerVision2040 at www.somervision2040.com.



2.6 Climate Forward Plan

Somerville Climate Forward is the City's climate action plan. It provides a set of implementable actions the City can take within the next 5 years to reduce Somerville's contribution to greenhouse gas pollution and prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change. This plan identifies opportunities for near-term action across different sectors, including buildings & energy, transportation & mobility, natural resources & waste, community resilience & health, and leadership.

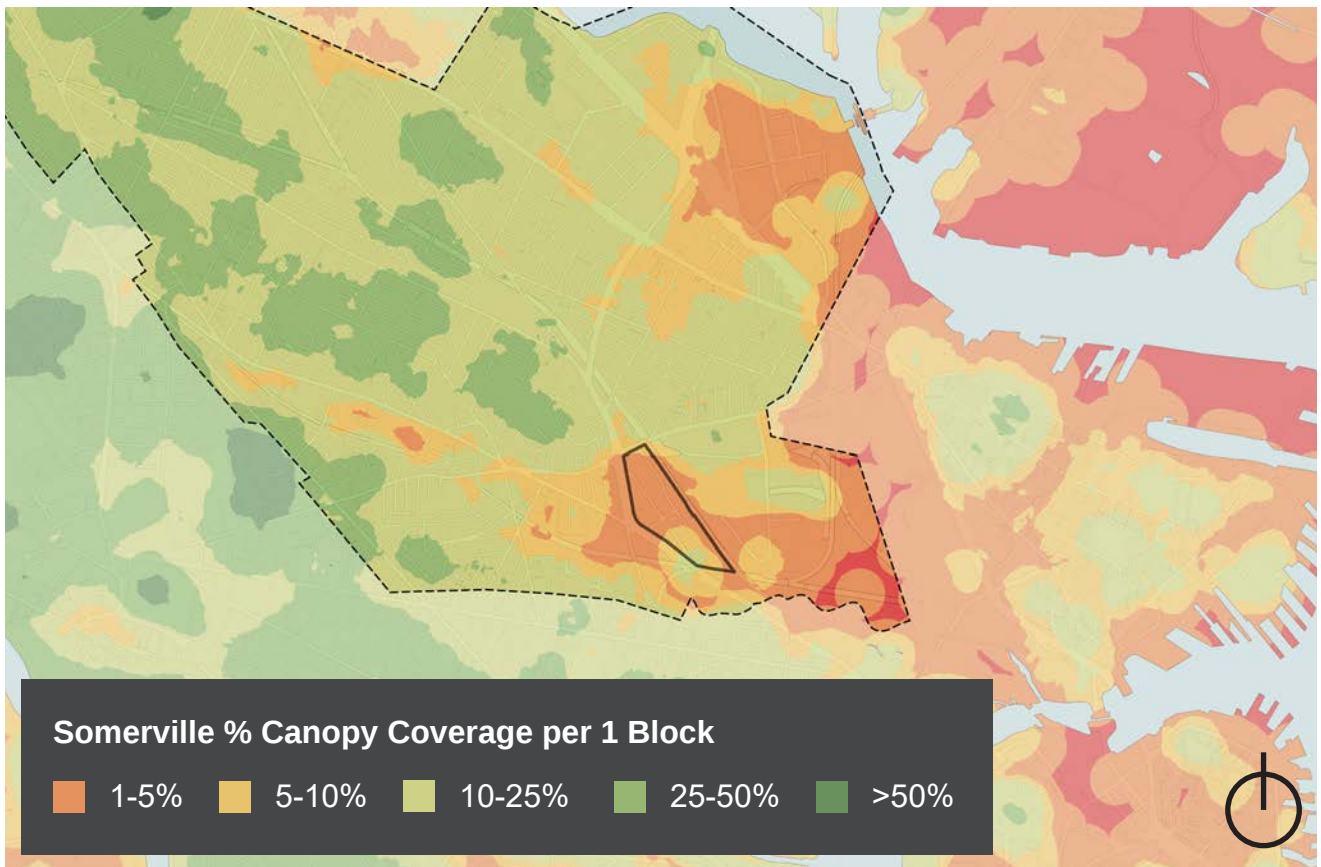
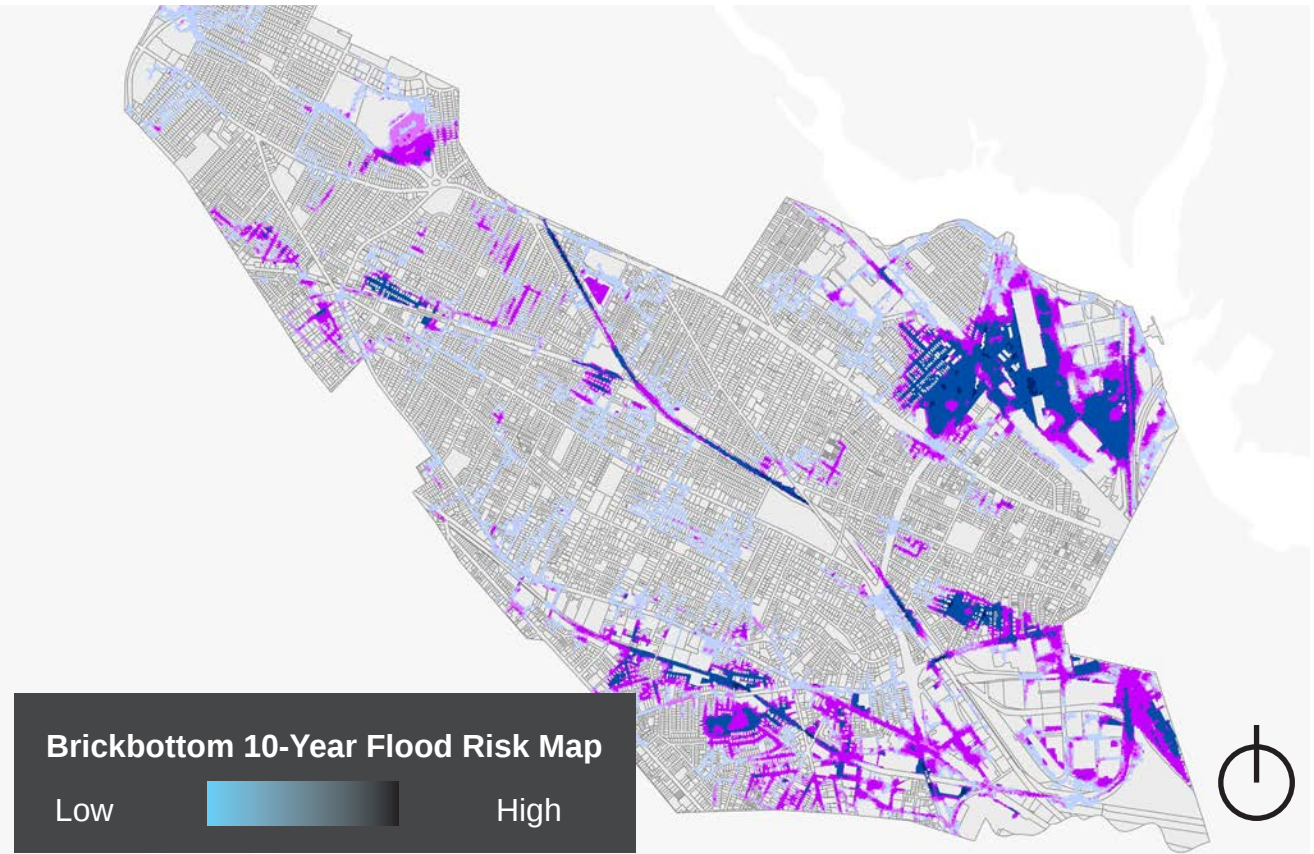
Some of the Somerville Climate Forward Plan's overarching goals are particularly relevant to the Brickbottom Neighborhood Plan vision:

- Increase the number of buildings with net-zero carbon emissions: In 2023, Somerville was one of the first communities to adopt and implement the Specialized Stretch Energy Code, which increases the energy efficiency requirement for all new residential and commercial buildings, as well as for additions and substantial renovations. Brickbottom offers the opportunity to create multiple large mixed-use and commercial buildings that would meet the threshold for those requirements.
- Increase the number of climate change resilience features in buildings and the streetscape: Designating streetscapes to accommodate stormwater filtration assists with flood mitigation; and the

Green Score in the zoning ordinance has also increased the requirements for resiliency, trees, and vegetation in new development both apply to all redevelopment in Brickbottom. As noted on the map on the next page, much of Brickbottom is susceptible to precipitation-induced flooding. Development of this neighborhood should consider resilience features to combat this climate impact.

- Expand the urban tree canopy and combat extreme heat: Brickbottom has a particularly low tree count per square foot compared to the rest of the city. This scenario presents an opportunity to significantly increase the size of the city's overall tree canopy to help counter the urban heat island.
- Expand access to pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transit infrastructure to lower emissions from vehicles: The proposals to improve walkability and bike safety in Brickbottom while increasing housing and job density near the Washington Street train station will allow accommodation of new residents and workers while lowering our per capita emissions.

Learn more about the Climate Forward Plan at www.somervillema.gov/departments/programs/somerville-climate-forward.



2.7 Engagement Process

To create a common starting point, study findings were shared with the community. The lived experiences of area residents and workers and their unique insights about the neighborhood were also a valuable part of the discussion. The goal was to hear many ideas, no matter how ambitious, and to not be limited by what may be perceived as feasible.

Community engagement and input were prioritized throughout this process. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, made that much more challenging than usual, requiring significant adjustments to the standard methods. Alternative strategies included:

- Conducting neighborhood meetings via video conference
- Offering detailed surveys online with illustrations and visuals
- Establishing office hours to answer phone calls
- Distributing worksheets for community members to print, draw on, and return
- Joining a masked neighborhood walk

Despite the pandemic challenges, efforts to communicate to a diverse range of area stakeholders were successful, and the community provided clear direction and meaningful feedback.

The Neighborhood Plan process began by sharing the analyses of current conditions, including the studies of surface transportation, underground infrastructure, and existing land uses. Open-ended questions were asked of community members to understand what they viewed as the biggest challenges and what opportunities they would like to see prioritized.

Meetings were held with landowners, elected officials, non-profit groups, local business owners, workers, and residents. Online workshops were held with the neighborhood to build a vision encompassing diverse stakeholder views and wider goals.

As the shared vision materialized, illustrative drawings and narratives were produced to help everyone visualize possible outcomes. These were shared with the community to elicit feedback, the input was then used to improve the plan before returning to the community for additional conversations. The cycle of feedback loops refined a vision that most stakeholders could support.



Below is a timeline of key engagement activities and public meetings. It is not comprehensive—dozens of smaller meetings were conducted and there were multiple conversations with stakeholders in the area.

Winter Worksheet (December 2020–January 2021)

Limited to remote interaction, the first feedback opportunity was a worksheet to gather big ideas and initial reactions from residents, businesses, and property owners about the future potential of Brickbottom.

Visioning Workshop (April 7, 2021)

After feedback from the winter worksheet was gathered and reviewed, a virtual public workshop was held to share findings and engage the community further. The focus was on the community's big ideas, values, and priorities for the future. The workshop also explored what uses they envisioned for their neighborhood and the public and community events and initiatives that would help support it.

Design Ideas Workshop (October 27, 2021)

A second virtual public workshop was held to engage the community with different design ideas that were illustrated based on the previous community feedback. Proposals included options for open spaces, zoning and development patterns, arts and culture, mobility and transportation, and short-term tactical interventions. As a follow-up, office hours were held and an exit survey was shared with the community in November to collect additional thoughts regarding the ideas shared during the Design Ideas Workshop.

In January 2022, an initial draft of the Plan was shared with the public, providing a month-long public comment period and encouraging everyone to provide feedback.

Open House (June 11, 2022)

Urban design highlights, key goals, and final vision for the plan were displayed in an open house format. Free flowing conversations were held with visitors to address their questions and concerns.

Once there was a draft plan, the team engaged an economic consultant to analyze the potential local impacts to the City from the infrastructure expenses necessary to enable development for increased tax revenue.

Neighborhood Meeting (July 8, 2024)

A hybrid in-person and virtual neighborhood meeting was held to inform community members of the most current draft of the Brickbottom Neighborhood Plan. City Staff presented an overview the draft plan's objectives and recommendations and answered questions from the community.



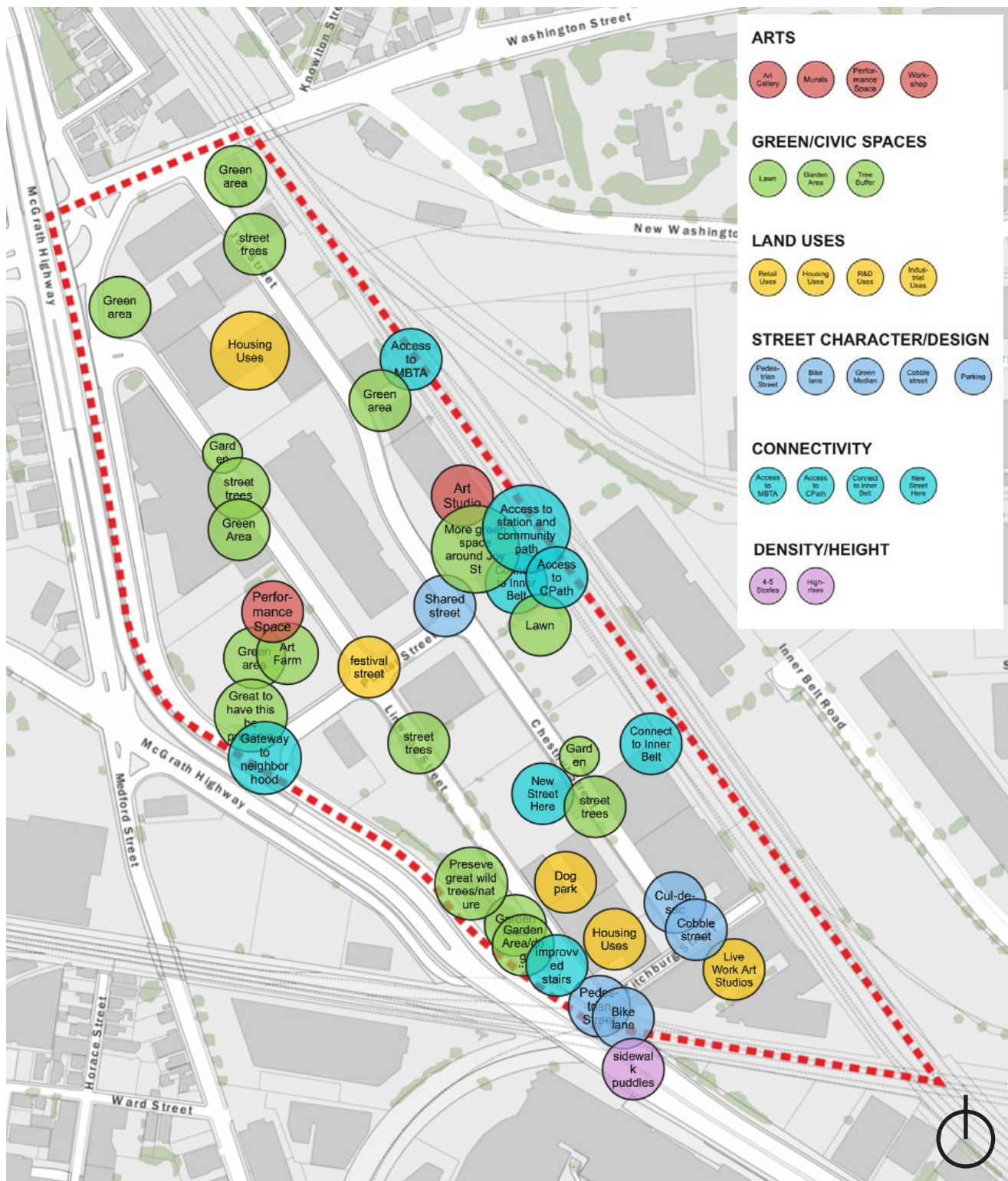
2.8 Community Feedback Summary

Many great ideas were heard throughout the plan's outreach process. The list below is not comprehensive but highlights the ideas heard the most and that inform many of the proposals in this document.

- Create smaller blocks with active street frontages to improve the pedestrian experience and mobility.
- Establish an unmistakable character through the neighborhood's architecture, civic spaces, and urban design to evoke its industrial heritage and focus on creative industries.
- Reimagine the allowed building types to transform into a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood.
- Prioritize quality-of-life improvements for residents and businesses, particularly regarding safety and walkability, that can be addressed in the short term.
- Identify opportunities to connect Brickbottom to the rest of Somerville by improving existing and establishing new pedestrian and bike links within the neighborhood and creating new connections to adjacent neighborhoods, the community path, and the GLX Station.
- Identify opportunities to create multiple types of new civic spaces and substantially increase the number of permeable areas, plantings, and trees.
- Preserve, expand, and diversify the neighborhood's art community.
- Help establish and promote a substantial presence of public artwork and creative industry events to attract a regional audience and make the neighborhood an arts district destination.
- Support the diversity of local businesses by helping them succeed in a less auto-oriented environment or assist them with economic transitions.

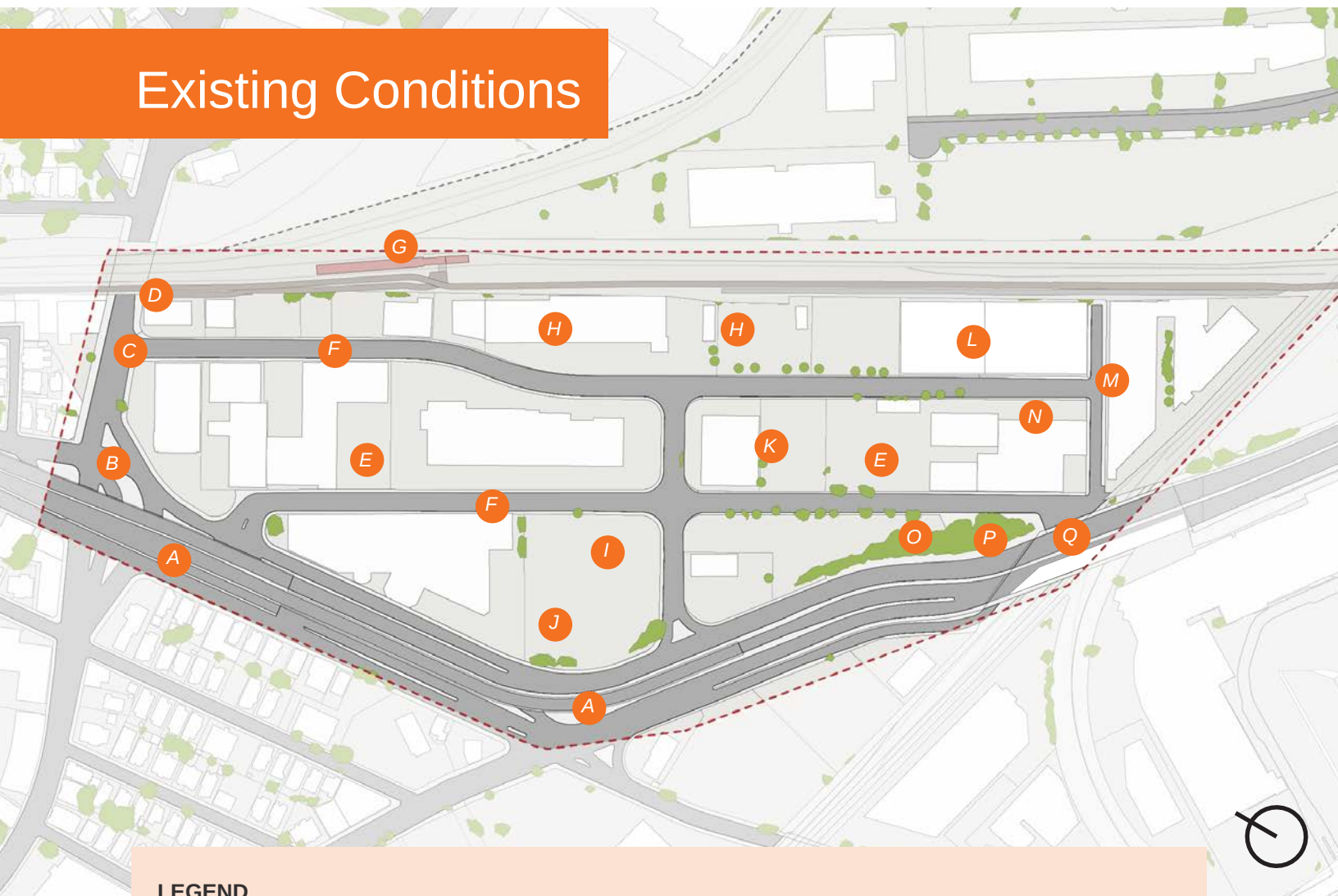


Open house and community engagement in June 2022.



Example the work done during the online visioning and design ideas virtual workshops held in 2021.

Existing Conditions



LEGEND

- A. Elevated McGrath Highway is a barrier between Brickbottom and the rest of Somerville.
- B. Very complex intersection at McGrath & Washington Street.
- C. Unfriendly intersection, especially for pedestrians and cyclists, at Joy and Washington Street.
- D. The only access to the Green Line and Community Path is hidden and remote from the actual station.
- E. Brickbottom has overly long blocks.
- F. All streets in Brickbottom have most of their space dedicated to cars, with narrow and deficient sidewalks.
- G. Inner Belt has no connection to Brickbottom or the GLX station.
- H. Thriving arts community (Joy Street Artist Studios & Neon Williams).
- I. ArtFarm is the only planned new open green space in Brickbottom.
- J. New Pump Station to be located in the northwest corner of ArtFarm.
- K. Most of the unbuild land in Brickbottom is impervious.
- L. 100 Chestnut St building.
- M. Thriving arts community (Brickbottom Artist Building)
- N. Deed restricted parking lot for Brickbottom Artist Building residents.
- O. Only existing green space.
- P. Stairs going up the Squire Bridge sidewalks to cross the MBTA tracks.
- Q. Somerville Ave Extension ("Scary Way") brings in vehicular traffic.



View of the new East Somerville Green Line station and the Community Path extension.



3. Vision for Brickbottom

3.1 Opportunities

3.2 Priorities

3.3 Concerns



3.1 Opportunities

MBTA Green Line Extension (GLX) Service

The GLX Service is an essential part of the strategy to increase density while minimizing a proportionate increase in traffic. East Somerville Station can become a locus for transit-oriented development with little to no parking provided.

McGrath Boulevard

Once McGrath Highway becomes a boulevard, there will be tremendous connectivity potential between Brickbottom and the future Milk Square and Union Square areas. It will also unlock the potential for pedestrian-oriented storefronts along Brickbottom's western edge.

Local Arts and Creative Industries

The current vibrant artist community at Joy Street Studios and Brickbottom Artist Building is an invaluable resource. Enhancing the current community and expanding opportunities for arts and creative

enterprises would strengthen Brickbottom and become a viable arts district.

Connections with Inner Belt

The transformational development potential in Inner Belt will provide a great opportunity to build synergy between the two areas. Crossing the rail lines will allow the diverse workforce of Inner Belt to easily participate in the dynamic activities of Brickbottom.

Community Path

The community path offers a unique opportunity for accessing Brickbottom by walking or biking without concerns about vehicle traffic. More access points to the path will further increase use of path and its safety.

New Street Connections

New street connections create opportunities to produce walkable, bikeable, and green street designs from the ground up.



Opportunities



About Potential New Green Spaces:

Proposed new green spaces in this plan are located on private land and are therefore only proposals at this stage. Creating these spaces will require negotiations with landowners and subject to change.

LEGEND

- A. Improved intersection at McGrath and Washington Street.
- B. Gateway plaza and connection to the MBTA station and community path. Potential site for a floating bus island and bus to train connection.
- C. Multi-modal McGrath Boulevard with space for rapid bus service, new tree canopy, and bike lanes.
- D. New streets to break down block sizes.
- E. New neighborhood park at Joy Street.
- F. Park and access to the MBTA station and Community Path.
- G. At-grade over the tracks connection to Inner Belt.
- H. Long-term accessible connection over the tracks bridge to Inner Belt for pedestrians and cyclists.
- I. Plaza and access to the community path and MBTA service road.
- J. New central park to extend ArtFarm and provide additional forested and recreational areas.
- K. New Poplar Street intersection to align with the future Milk Square.
- L. New Park with arts programming and Pocket Park at Chestnut Street.
- M. Green space with passive green and playground at Fitchburg/Linwood St.
- N. Galleria, public stair and elevator to access the Squires Bridge sidewalk.
- O. Redesigned Somerville Ave extension and Linwood Street.
- P. Potential Commuter Rail Station.
- Q. Potential Inner Belt Rd underpass.
- R. Union East potential development.
- S. Potential Internal bus route, would require street adjustments along route.

3.2 Community Priorities

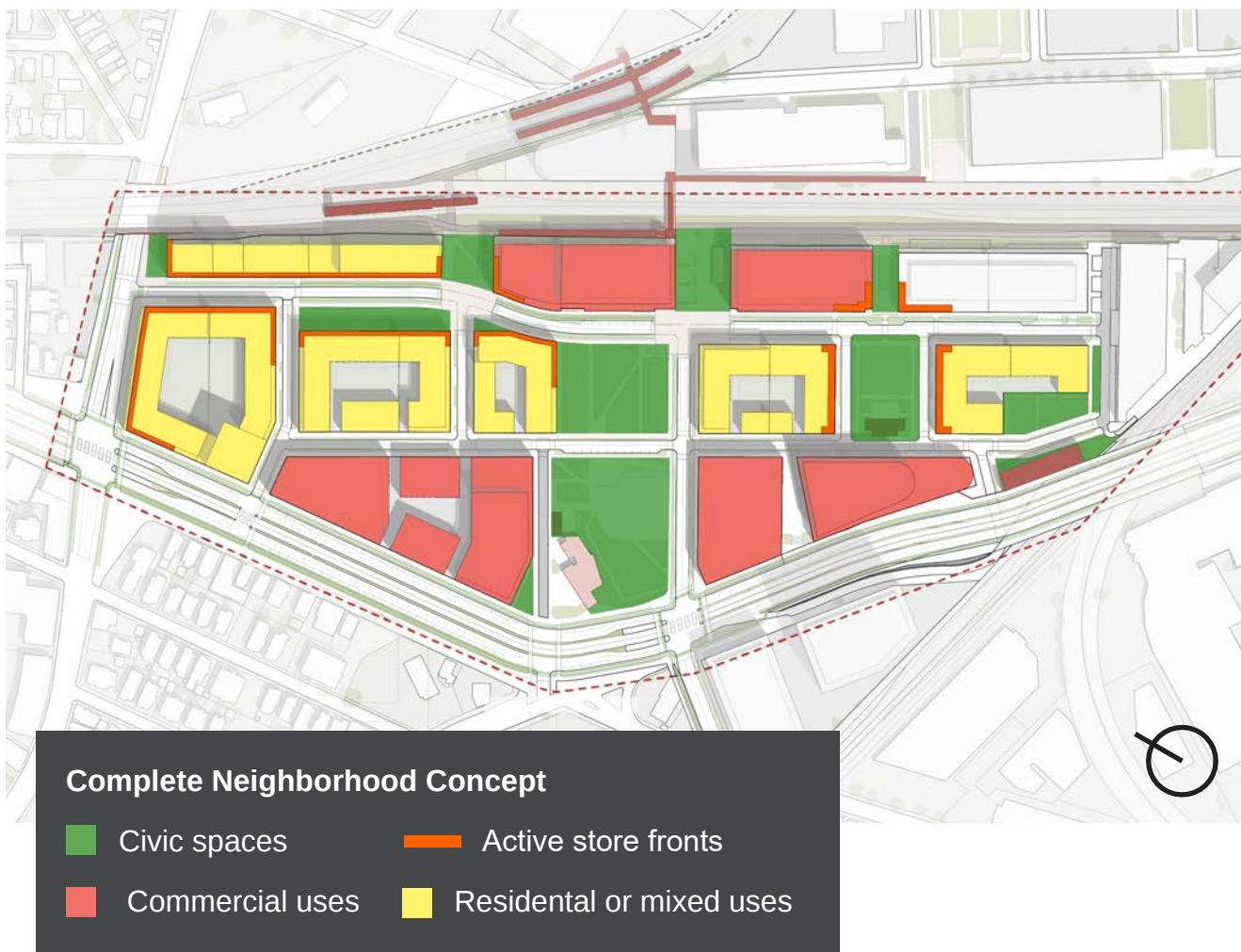
Based on community feedback, conversations with stakeholders, city-wide documents, and older planning efforts, the following broad goals for Brickbottom were

established. These goals inform the vision and recommendations of the Brickbottom Neighborhood Plan.

Create a Complete Neighborhood

A complete neighborhood describes one where residents have safe and convenient access to essential daily goods and services. To the extent possible, it should include varied housing options, multiple types of retail, nearby public schools and open spaces, recreational facilities, health services, affordable and easy-to-use transportation options, and other public

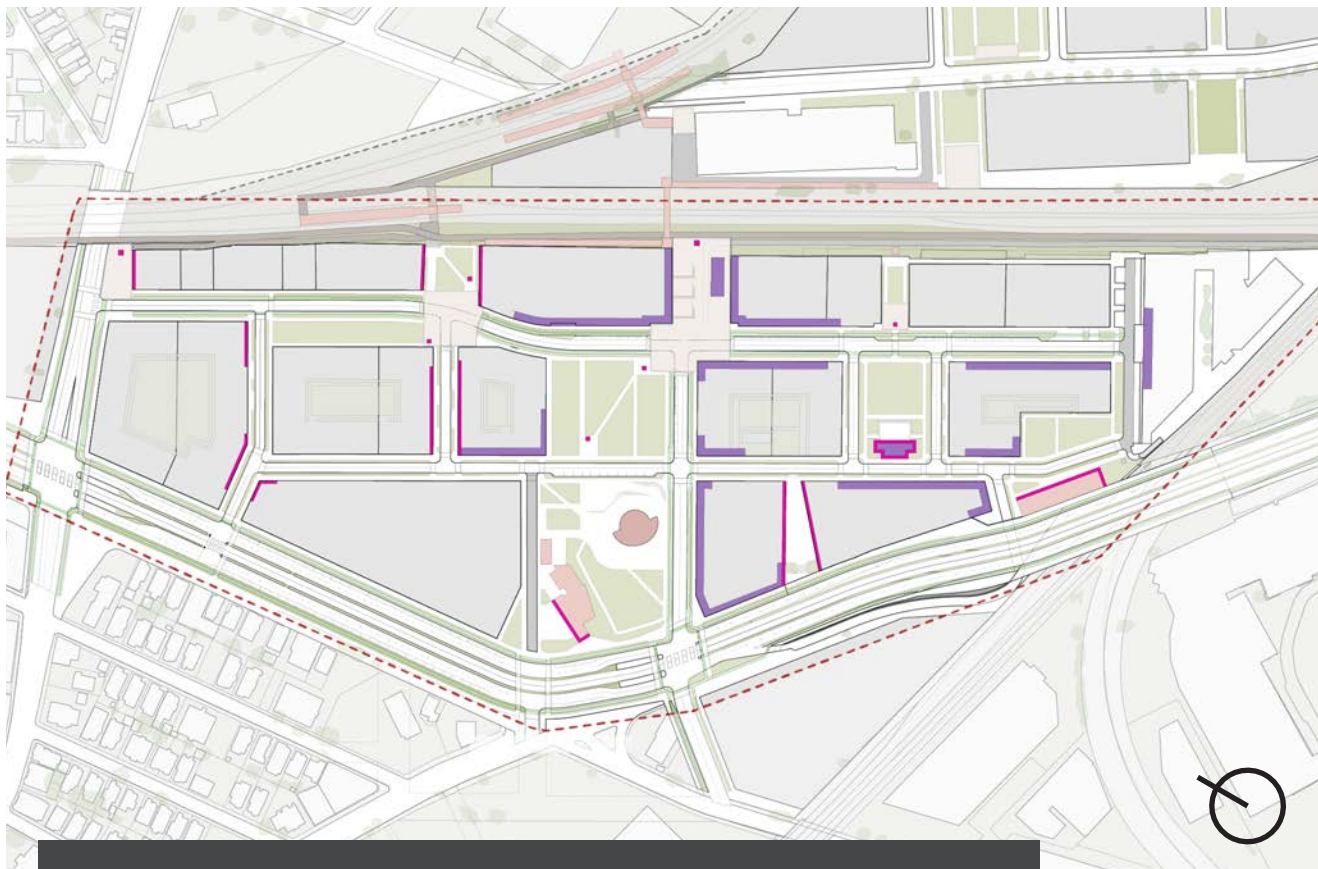
services. While the amenities do not all need to be within the neighborhood boundary, they must be easily accessible in neighboring areas. Another key element is walkable, bikeable, and safe public environments suitable for people of all ages and abilities.



Support Arts & Creative Uses

Brickbottom is home to a vibrant community of working artists and makers. Supporting and enhancing the community's existing artist and creative community is central to this plan. Implementing the policies, programs, and infrastructure recommended in this document will support and grow the art-oriented small business community in

the area. With a thoughtful strategy and robust public investment, Brickbottom has the potential to be a great arts district in the region or even the country.



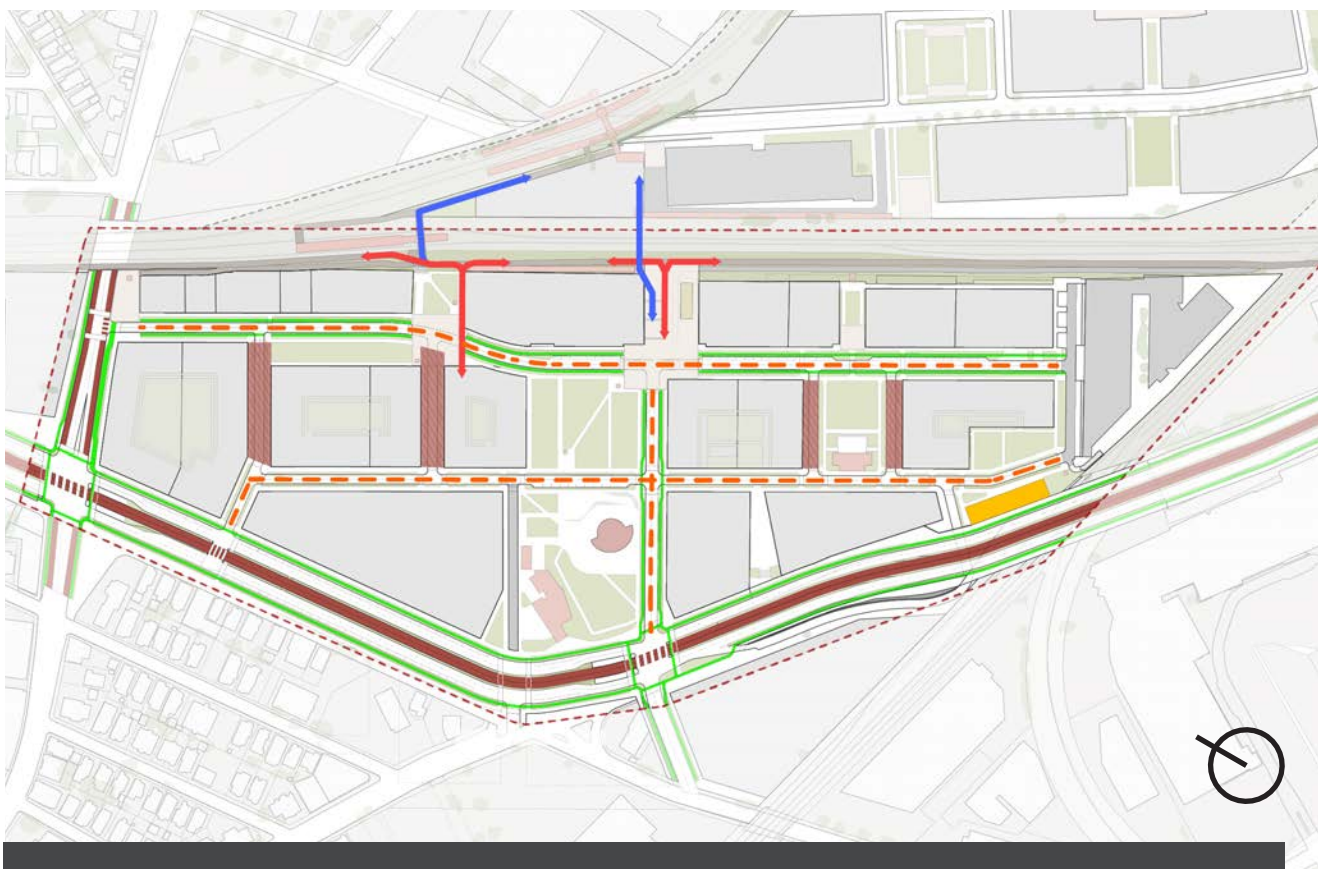
Recommended Arts & Culture Uses and Activities

■ Arts & creative spaces ■ Potential public art location

Improve Access and Connectivity

A robust approach to mobility considers all elements of movement in the public realm: pedestrians, bicycles, motor vehicles, public transit, and the delivery of goods. How will these modes navigate, enter, and exit the neighborhood safely and efficiently? What

is the neighborhood's relationship with the surround areas and how easily can one transition between them?



Access and Connectivity Concept

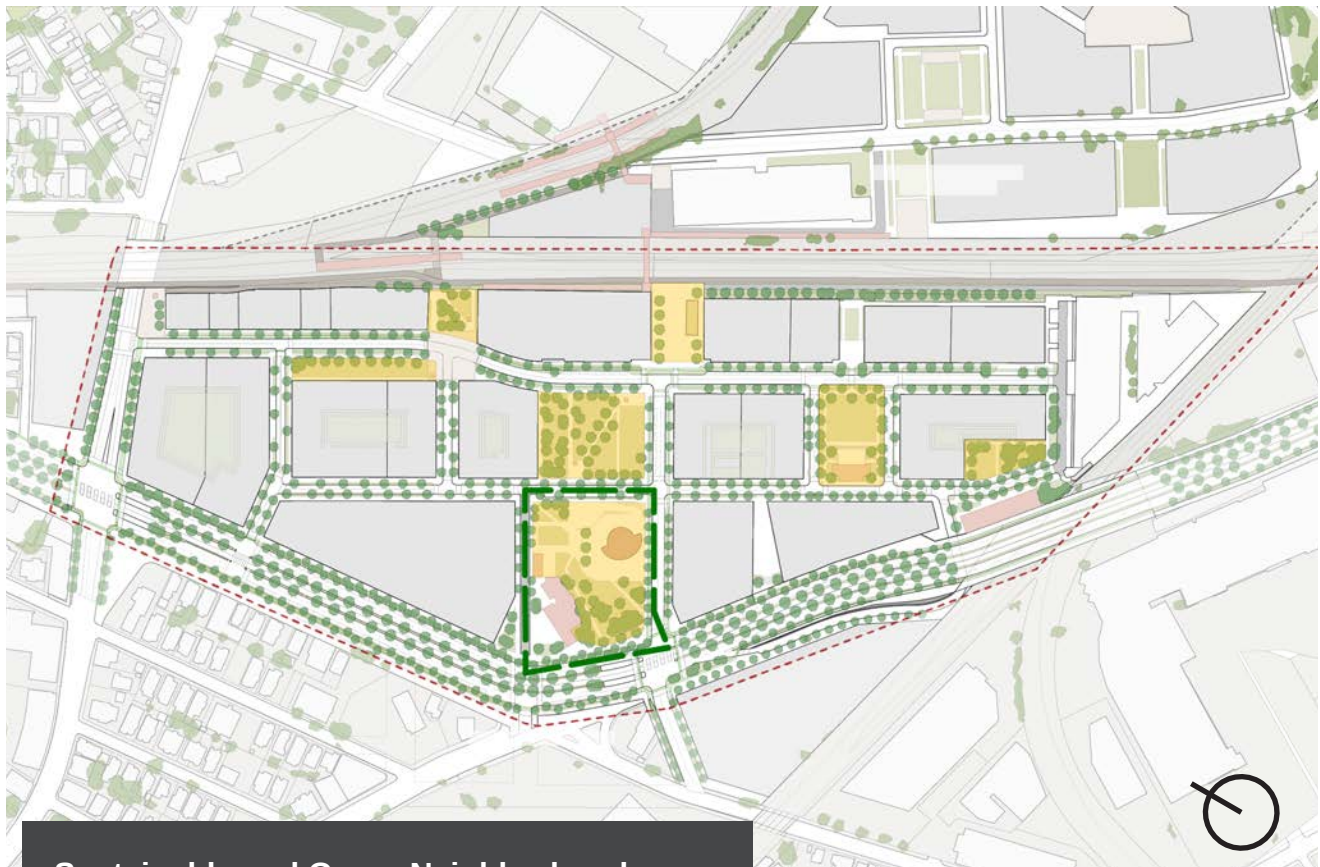
- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  Potential connection to Community Path |  Future connection to Inner Belt | |
|  Improved streetscape |  Bike lanes |  Potential bus rapid lanes |
|  New transversal streets to reduce block size |  Civic building with stairs | |

Design Sustainably with a Pedestrian Focus

Too often, vehicles are prioritized in urban design, or buildings are designed without fully considering its interaction with the pedestrian realm or its long term sustainability.

There are two general aspects of human-centered design: physical and psychological. The physical involves the mechanics of how humans of various abilities will move in the

space, how hard it will be to navigate each part of the neighborhood, and what barriers they may encounter. The psychological aspect is where the feelings of the people are considered. Questions are asked such as: Does this area feel safe for a person on foot? Does it feel welcoming? Would people choose to be there?

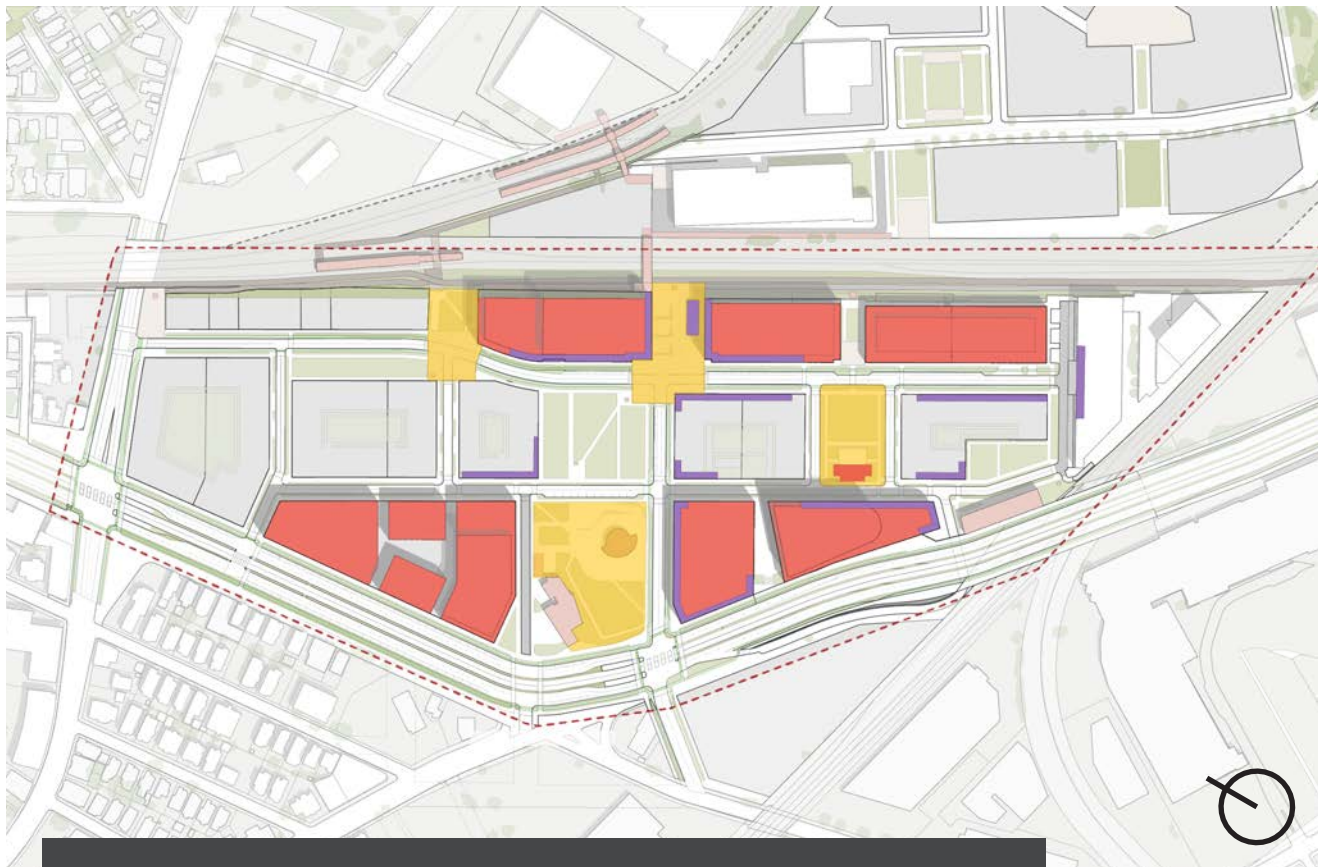


Sustainable and Green Neighborhood

- Increase tree canopy coverage
- Support the implementation of ArtFarm
- Maximize natural light in civic spaces

Support Economic Development

The neighborhood's retail, laboratory, art, industrial, and research development can be further guided to encourage a well-rounded business ecosystem. By amplifying the economic potential associated with the creative community, there are opportunities for multiple types of businesses that can all thrive and complement one another. However, for this strategy to fully succeed, a coordinated workforce development initiative can help.



Economic Development Concept

- Well-balanced development of commercial spaces
- Spaces to amplify the creative community
- Build spaces to foster activities, education, and experiences

3.3 Concerns

There are some considerations that need to be an integral part of all the strategies and recommendations for action throughout the Brickbottom neighborhood. These on-going issues have been incorporated into this vision but must remain at the forefront of thinking as additional studies and implementation occurs.

Increasing Affordable Housing and Live-Work Spaces

In order to create a complete neighborhood as identified by the community priorities, the land uses need to support the activities of daily life as much as possible. Brickbottom primarily needs the housing supply increased and additional opportunities for creative workspaces provided. The City of Somerville Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance was established in 1991 and has adapted to evolving community and housing needs.

While the specifics vary depending on building type and district, the general requirement is any new buildings with four or

more residential units must provide 20% of those units to be affordable.

As a transform area, Brickbottom offers a unique opportunity to allow high-density housing projects near mass transit access that will trigger inclusionary zoning requirements. It can be a powerful tool for leveraging private development value, rather than limited public funds, to produce affordable units. However, inclusionary zoning is not a silver bullet to the regional displacement and housing affordability crisis.



Supporting New and Existing Arts Businesses

The shared goals for Brickbottom include support for arts and creative uses. For this effort to succeed, the City must support the art and creative businesses differently than commercial or residential. Assisting current art and creative businesses with their growth will help preserve the district's spirit as Brickbottom evolves.

As the arts district grows, there will be changes to the studio space offerings that could make Brickbottom a more attractive location for artists to produce, exhibit, and sell their work. The City's Economic Development Division and the Somerville Arts Council have long collaborated and are currently working closely on a future performance and community space in Brickbottom's Artfarm.

The Joy Street Studios are a staple of Brickbottom. At approximately 55,000 square feet of space, it is one of Somerville's largest clusters of artists. The City recognizes

the value and rarity of this type of artist community, and has engaged the current landowners to discuss how redevelopment would impact these artists.

The landowners share the view that this type of artist community has intrinsic and economic value. They are committed to including the current tenants in future redevelopment projects by providing new facilities in an equivalent amount of high-quality, clustered studios, similar to the ones they currently occupy. The owners intend to maintain rent prices at levels similar to the current rates. The City will continue to engage the landowners and current building occupants to facilitate this process.

Brickbottom will likely need an arts district organization. The City will explore arts district management models to determine the best strategy so Brickbottom can grow into a regional destination.



Mitigating Worker Displacement

One of the challenges for transform districts like Brickbottom are the effects on longstanding stakeholders.

Just as the City has worked with businesses across Somerville facing similar transition periods, those processes and programs can assist existing businesses and their employees in Brickbottom. Sometimes, industrial operators can't find a suitable location within Somerville that meets their needs at the price required for their operations. In these cases, the City shifts the focus to the company's local employees, who may be unable to follow their employer to a new location. The Job Creation and Retention Trust (JCRT), funded by linkage fees on new commercial development, supports Somerville residents facing those scenarios. The JCRT funds opportunities like the Asian American Civic Association's Building Energy Efficient Maintenance Skills (BEEMS) and Green Automotive

Skills (GAMS) job training programs. The drawback is that these programs are currently limited to Somerville residents, while often, residents from neighboring communities are also affected if a Somerville business moves away or closes.

The City supports the perspective that Brickbottom should maintain the presence of light industrial uses and aims to encourage incorporating these uses into the mixed-use pedestrian-oriented neighborhood. For example, there could be a niche auto-detailing business on the ground floor of an office, or an electrician operating from a storefront office with their trucks stored in a neighboring commercial garage to avoid curb cuts. Implementing these concepts may be challenging, but it could retain good-quality trade jobs in Somerville.



Equity Goals

In order to create a truly sustainable and human-centered neighborhood, equity and inclusion must be primarily considered in all decision. Diversity allows for new perspectives in conversations and programs. Equity creates a fair environment that can provide opportunities for people who may need assistance, and inclusion provides a sense of belonging and understanding that is critical to strengthening the community.

While it is often very difficult to see beyond inherent biases, it is extremely important to consider the experiences of all people. The recommended actions will ensure the voices of those who are not yet Brickbottom residents, workers, or visitors will be comfortable in the neighborhood and willing to participate in the on-going decision-making.

Construction Impact

While the impacts of nearby construction are something most residents experience, the City recognizes that existing residents of transform areas are disproportionately impacted due to the amount of growth. Unfortunately, economic development and infrastructure improvements tend to be noisy.

Key impacts include:

- Construction usually involves loud noises from machinery, drilling, or hammering, which is disruptive.
- Construction work can create a lot of dust and dirt, affecting the nearby public realm and neighbors.
- Construction might block roads or pathways, making mobility harder and exacerbating traffic challenges in the neighborhood. Sometimes, construction vehicles or materials might occupy parking spaces, causing inconvenience for residents.
- There might be safety concerns during construction, such as stored materials, loose debris, or tripping hazards around the site.
- Impact is amplified when neighbors, such as the Brickbottom Artists Building, work from home so focus is disrupted.

While construction in these areas is unavoidable, the City is committed to facilitating communication between developers and residents to find ways to minimize impacts whenever possible. Some issues, like road closures, may be addressed ahead of time during the project review process, while others will be abated by strict enforcement of construction safety protocols and the noise ordinance. When neighbors find any projects causing unexpected or unreasonable disruptions, they are encouraged to call the constituent service center as 311 so that the City can attempt to find solutions or issue penalties if rules are not followed.



Infrastructure Capacity

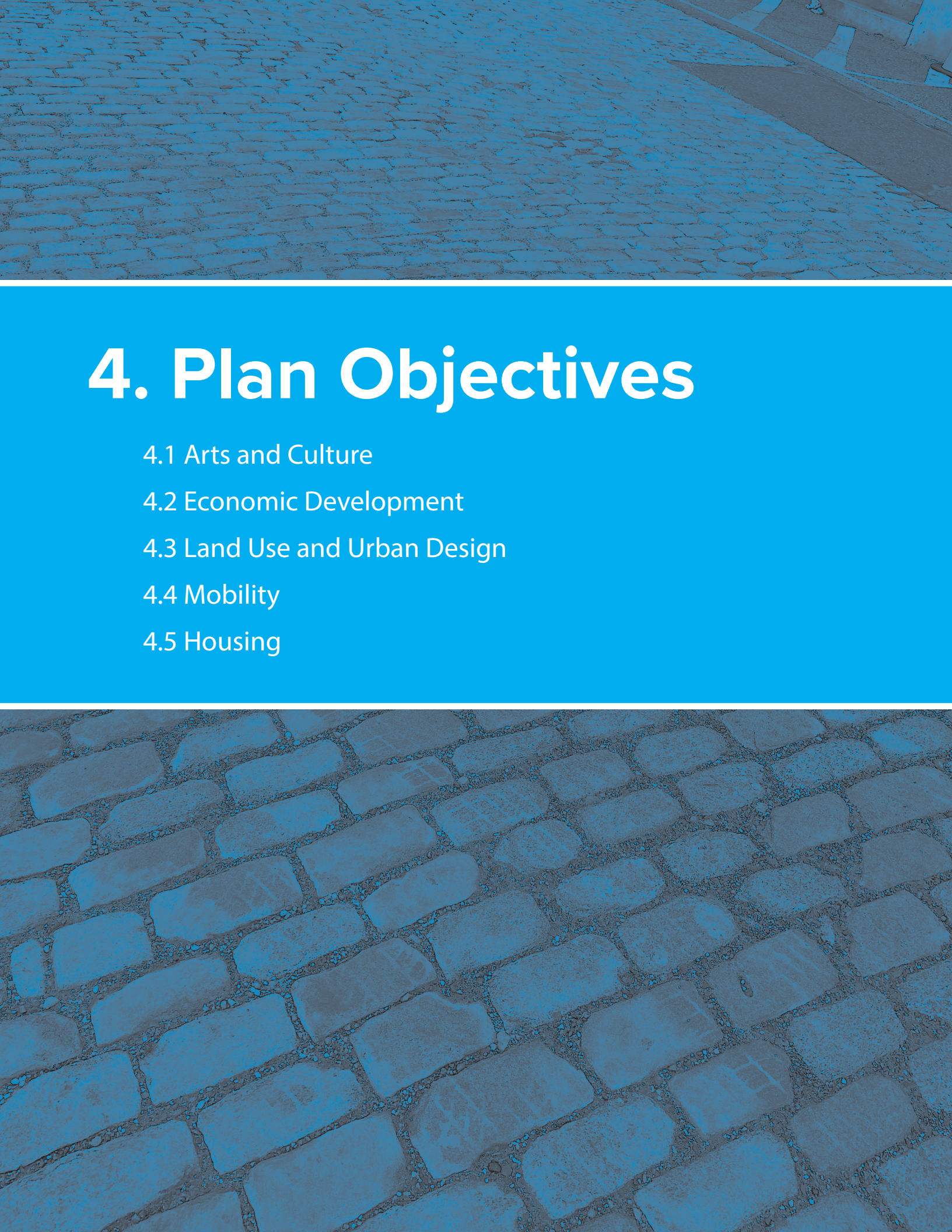
Somerville has old infrastructure – the city has a rich history to demonstrate its age and significance. As evidenced by the tank installation at ArtFarm and the Somerville Avenue Utility and Streetscape project, the City has been working diligently to reduce flooding in the lowest lying areas. The city has combined drainage for the storm water and the sewer, which was not unusual for the time it was installed. As the city grew and storms became more frequent, the underground systems were challenged so this work will continue to divide those necessities into separate systems.

However, some of the infrastructure is owned, operated, and installed by private utility companies. Telecommunications systems, such as cable and fiber optics for phone and internet services, are installed and maintained by a variety of companies. These services are well coordinated as

installation usually occurs in the public right-of-way (under the streets or overhead on poles) so licensing is necessary, but the City cannot mandate that service be provided.

Another challenge that exists city-wide is electrical power supply. The City works closely with Eversource on the power necessary to supply the changing needs and achieve the carbon neutral goals of Climate Forward. There are on-going projects across the region to increase and upgrade service and there is an anticipation that the city will need an additional substation soon. The new substation will need to be located on the eastern side of the city (which includes east of Union Square, Brickbottom, Inner Belt, and Assembly) but area has not yet been determined. There are also currently equipment shortages for transformers and switch gears that create issues for new development and construction timing.





4. Plan Objectives

4.1 Arts and Culture

4.2 Economic Development

4.3 Land Use and Urban Design

4.4 Mobility

4.5 Housing

4.1 Arts and Culture

Brickbottom has a vibrant arts community and the potential to become a regional arts destination. To achieve this vision, the neighborhood needs to foster its existing creative spirit while intentionally adding new arts and creative spaces. Preserving existing artist workspace and adding a range of new workspace is essential during the neighborhood's redevelopment. As more artist workspaces are created over time, they should include purpose-built workspaces

for specific artist expressions based on community need and desire. To complement workspaces and attract visitors, Brickbottom artists also need places to showcase their work to the public, such as galleries and performing arts venues, as well as classrooms for teaching and passing on their crafts.



Studio space in Joy Street Studios.

Art should be celebrated throughout every aspect of Brickbottom, transforming the neighborhood into a living canvas. Public art installations, from murals to sculptures to performances, will not only establish the district's character but also provide local artists with potential commissions. Encouraging property owners and developers to integrate public art throughout their projects will further solidify this identity. With art as a central focus, Brickbottom's redevelopment should explore ways to merge art with the other goals for the neighborhood. Wherever possible, the questions should be asked: How does art integrate with this work? Both public and private entities should consider how art can be integrated into different aspects of the neighborhood, such as landscaping, infrastructure, streetscapes, and the celebration of Brickbottom's history and diversity of residents and commercial activities. Art can also be used for educational purposes to support other community goals, such as equity and sustainability.

Envisioning Brickbottom as a living canvas also means crafting places where art can occur. Brickbottom could become the district of Somerville where large-scale art festivals and cultural events are hosted. The illustrative designs for public spaces throughout this plan show opportunities for stages, markets, and other infrastructure to support the kind of gatherings that allow the artist community to share their work with Somerville and the region.

Affordability is a key concern for the neighborhood and broader artist community, which is already struggling with a lack of affordable workspaces due to the high cost of real estate in the area and displacement by other businesses. A range of strategies should be considered to protect existing and create new affordable artist workspaces. One opportunity a redevelopment occurs is to cluster creative spaces, to allow for shared facilities and resource pooling, and to further reduce individual costs for production space.



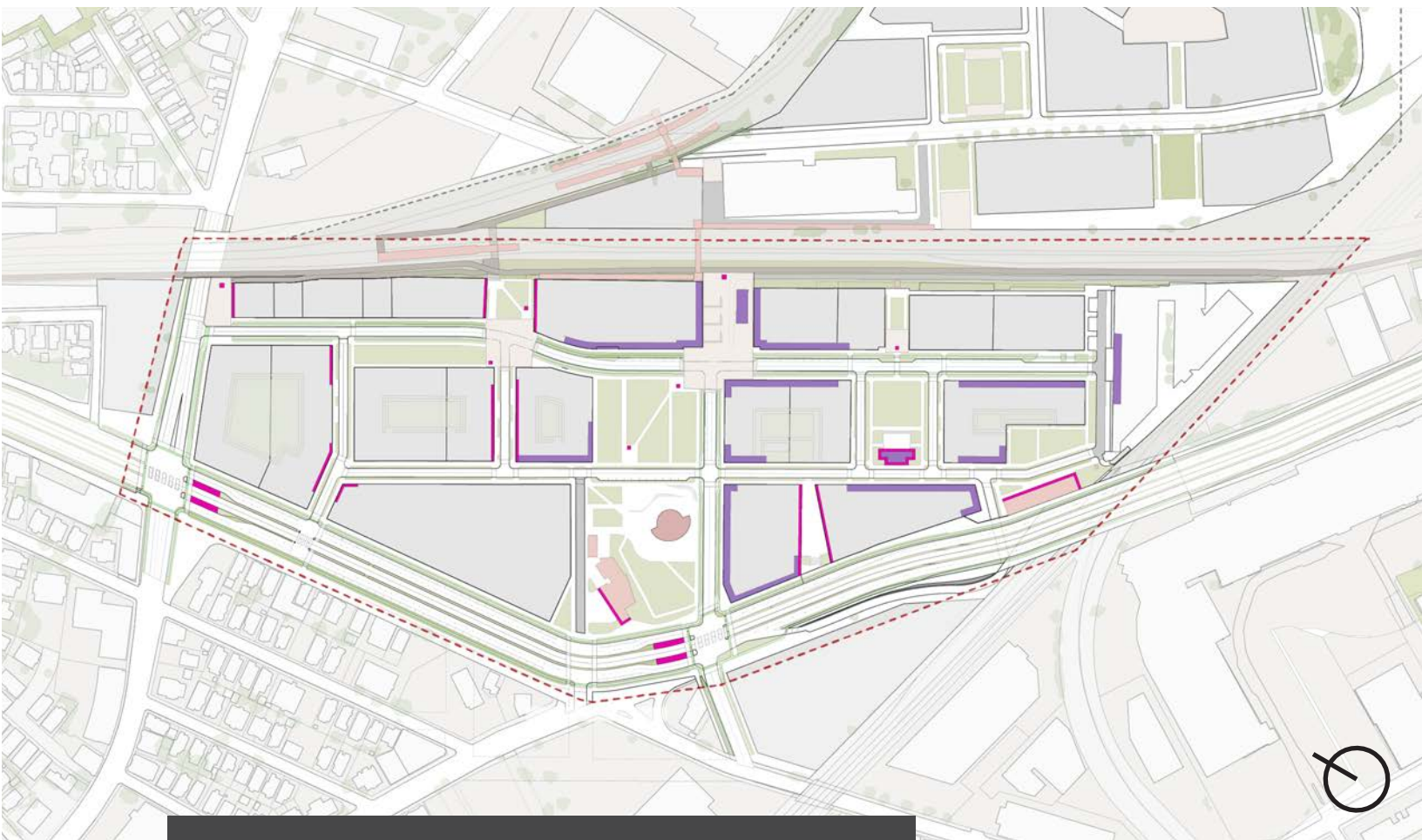
“We value the (gritty, arts) character of the neighborhood.”



Mural by Calo Rosa, East Somerville



Neon Williams in Brickbottom



Location of Arts and Creative Spaces

— Arts and creative active uses and ground floors

This plan calls for a dedicated arts-oriented district management organization to advocate, plan, and execute development of Brickbottom as an arts district, foster relations between all parties, coordinate public art programs, events, and support services for Brickbottom artists, and market the Brickbottom Arts District to the public. The organization would produce a formal business plan for the district to serve as a roadmap for a sustainable creative scene to flourish in Brickbottom. This type of plan could explore financing options like a Business Improvement District or District Improvement Financing to access additional financial resources needed to implement this vision. An arts district plan could also

explore how to equitably engage the broader community through art, such as a publicly funded program to connect local youth interested in an arts career with the artists in the district. Other key elements could include, but are not limited to, arts-oriented programs and events, support for affordable and flexibly used studio spaces, and methods of distributing resources to maintain and expand the creative community. Smaller, ongoing initiatives like storefront art programs, seasonal markets, open studio tours, and regular live performances will be crucial to keep residents and visitors engaged and support artists and makers as the area evolves.

Dallas Arts District



Wharf District in Washington, D.C.



To ensure a flourishing arts scene, artist participation in the planning process is essential at every stage of planning and redevelopment. Local artists should be involved in the design and construction of the neighborhood, potentially through artist-led organizations working with the Somerville Arts Council. A representative organization could act as advocates and facilitators to help execute business development and foster networking opportunities. Such a group could assist with organizing social events

and community activities within the neighborhood.

Brickbottom's established artist and creative community is its legacy. Supporting this community is paramount and the future demands a vibrant and inclusive arts scene. This means encouraging creativity that is energetic and stays true to the neighborhood's character. Brickbottom needs to cultivate a diverse artistic landscape to ensure its long-term success.

Short Term Actions

1. Ensure that local artists are directly involved in the creation of any future arts district, planning for the district, or representative organization established for the area.
2. Require or incentivize redevelopment to include no net loss of existing artist studios or artist housing within Brickbottom.

Long-Term Changes

1. Establish an arts district and adopt a guiding arts district plan to guide further economic and business development of the area.
2. Integrate public art throughout the neighborhood at every opportunity within the public realm, in the architectural and site design of private development, and in event programming.
3. Coordinate a diverse range of activities and cultural events at ArtFarm and throughout the neighborhood to attract visitors and draw further attention to the arts within Brickbottom.
4. Engage with local and diverse range of artists to design and fabricate public art installations.

Wynwood Arts District in Miami, Florida



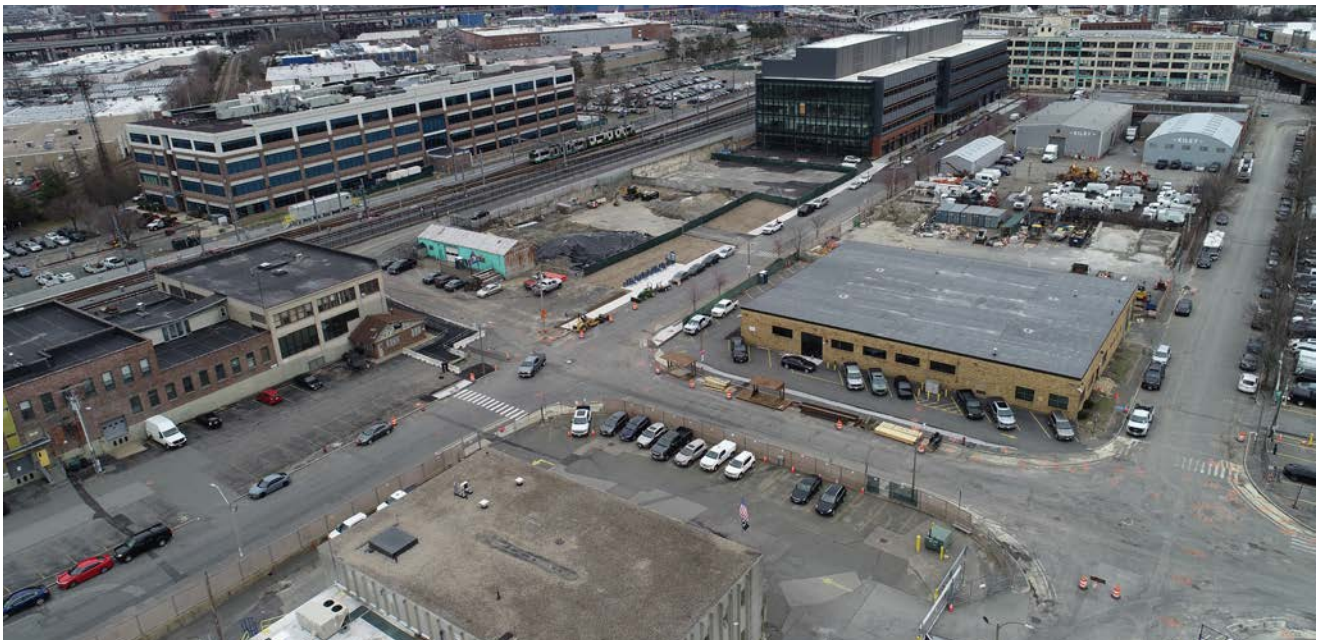
4.2 Economic Development

To ensure an economically sustainable path forward, Brickbottom needs to have a mix of different commercial uses for a variety of local jobs to produce an active daytime population and offer services needed for the daily lives of residents and workers. This is a complicated endeavor as development is driven by economic forces. Smart policymaking is needed to encourage diversity in the types of businesses in the neighborhood, so the area is less susceptible to market fluctuations.

The recent boom in research and development uses has brought large commercial buildings to Somerville, including

Brickbottom, creating jobs in the life sciences industry and moving the city closer to the SomerVision 2040 goal of a 1:1 job to worker ratio. However, with new construction and rising costs, special effort is needed to preserve and extend Somerville's status as a home for artists and creatives. Coordinating with developers early in their process is critical to establish viable transition plans where existing artist workspace is being redeveloped, ensuring those communities can stay in the neighborhood in the interim and after construction.

*“Collaboration between arts
and science.”*



Art and creative professionals are often recognized for their cultural contributions but are not always viewed or supported as small business owners. Brickbottom presents an opportunity to amplify the economic potential associated with the creative community and contribute to a healthy mix of businesses. Office, research and development, and other uses can co-exist and work collaboratively with the artists and creative uses. Incentivizing affordable artist studios, maker spaces, galleries, and performance spaces and providing marketing support for classes and showings will be key to help local artists offer more customer-oriented experiences.

While development and business creation must be led by private entities, the City has many opportunities to guide and support

development that meets the goals for the neighborhood. Permitting procedures can be simplified to make it easier for businesses to use the sidewalks on these streets for sales displays, outdoor dining, and art installations. Innovative incentive programs should be studied to support small and local shops and restaurants and ensure that the businesses can start up and adapt to the market. New zoning regulations can require active ground floor uses along key pedestrian streets such as Joy/Chestnut Street and Poplar Street. Additionally, zoning incentives should be evaluated, such as density bonuses for developments that exceed the minimum requirements for ACE space.



Development in the neighborhood will likely be slow due to the current landownership, as existing businesses and utility companies are not under pressure to relocate or redevelop. This does not mean the neighborhood should remain stagnant or cannot become an arts destination before redevelopment. Redesigning streets to improve access and safety for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit, and increasing green space and plantings will demonstrate the community goals for the

neighborhood and further guide future development. Owners of surface parking lots could be incentivized to allow pop-up (temporary) uses that encourage people to visit, such as shipping container beer gardens, pickleball courts, or performance venues and art installations. Perhaps temporary structures could even be installed for cooperative creative spaces with shared facilities to encourage new artists and makers to come to Brickbottom.

Short-Term Actions

1. Incentivize property owners to activate under-used sites with pop-up uses and events.
2. Require or incentivize redevelopment to have active ground story uses along key main streets and civic spaces.
3. Require or incentivize redevelopment to include one or more buildings that provide multiple individual artist creative studio spaces.
4. Permit Artisanal Production uses to provide ancillary food & beverage services or retail sales of products customarily associated with the products or goods produced on-site. Encourage such businesses to sell other hand-fabricated or hand-manufactured parts and custom or craft consumer goods produced by other local ACE uses.
5. Provide support to those seeking licensing for sidewalk cafe seating, outdoor product displays, vending, block parties, or other event permitting.

Long-Term Changes

1. Assist businesses and artists displaced by redevelopment with relocation assistance, preferably so that they remain within Brickbottom.
2. Concentrate Arts & Creative Enterprise uses in the eastern side of Brickbottom with a focus on buildings fronting Poplar Street, Chestnut Street, Linwood Street to Poplar, and the new central park.

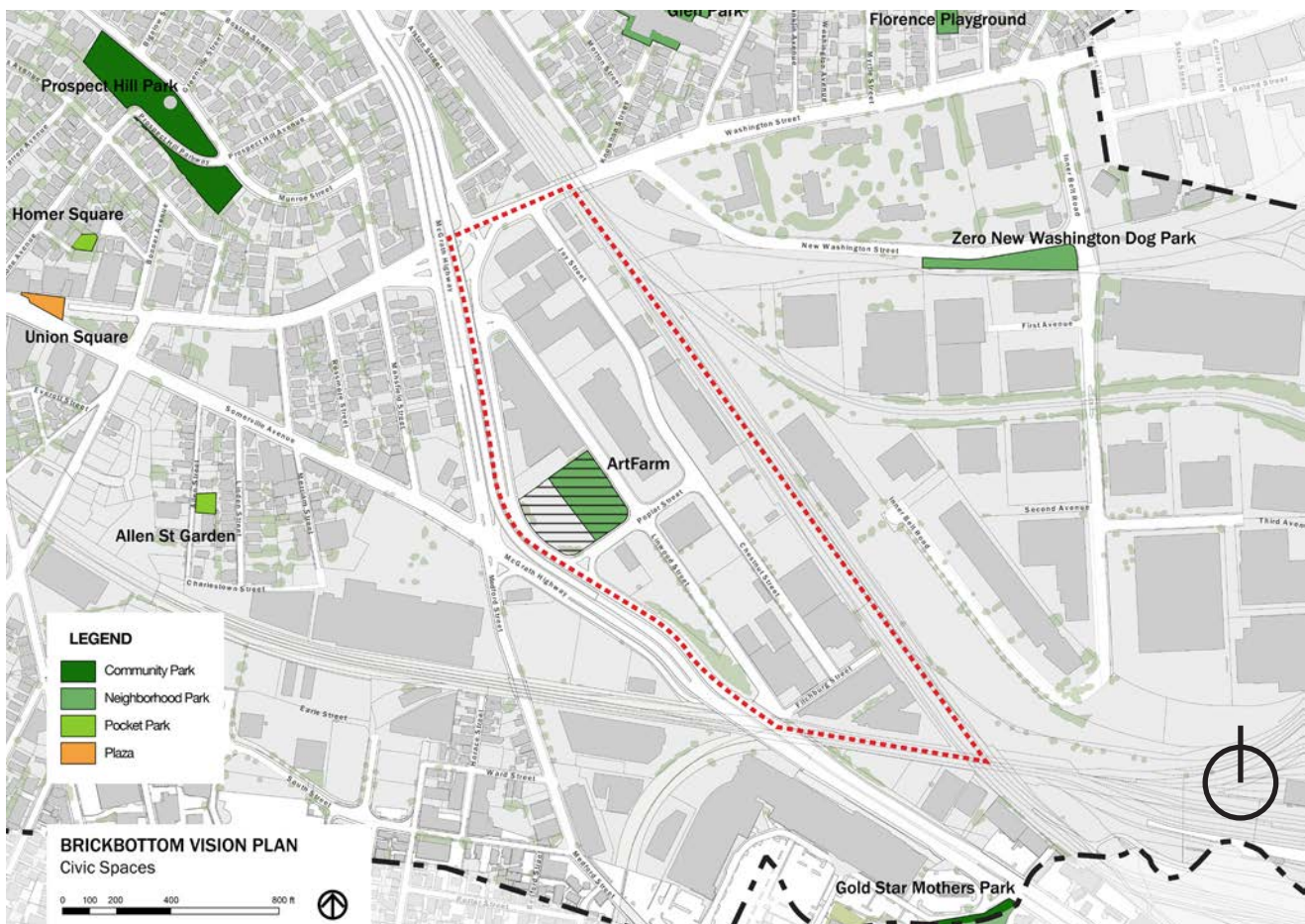


Examples of temporary and pop-up structures for art spaces.

4.3 Land Use and Urban Design

Brickbottom has the potential to be a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood with a thriving arts scene. However, there are some challenges that need to be addressed. The streets are currently dominated by cars and trucks, and long blocks and lack of connections make walking burdensome. The only current civic space, ArtFarm, is still under development. The current neighborhood is car-oriented in almost every aspect. The vision for Brickbottom is to create a complete neighborhood with a mix of residential

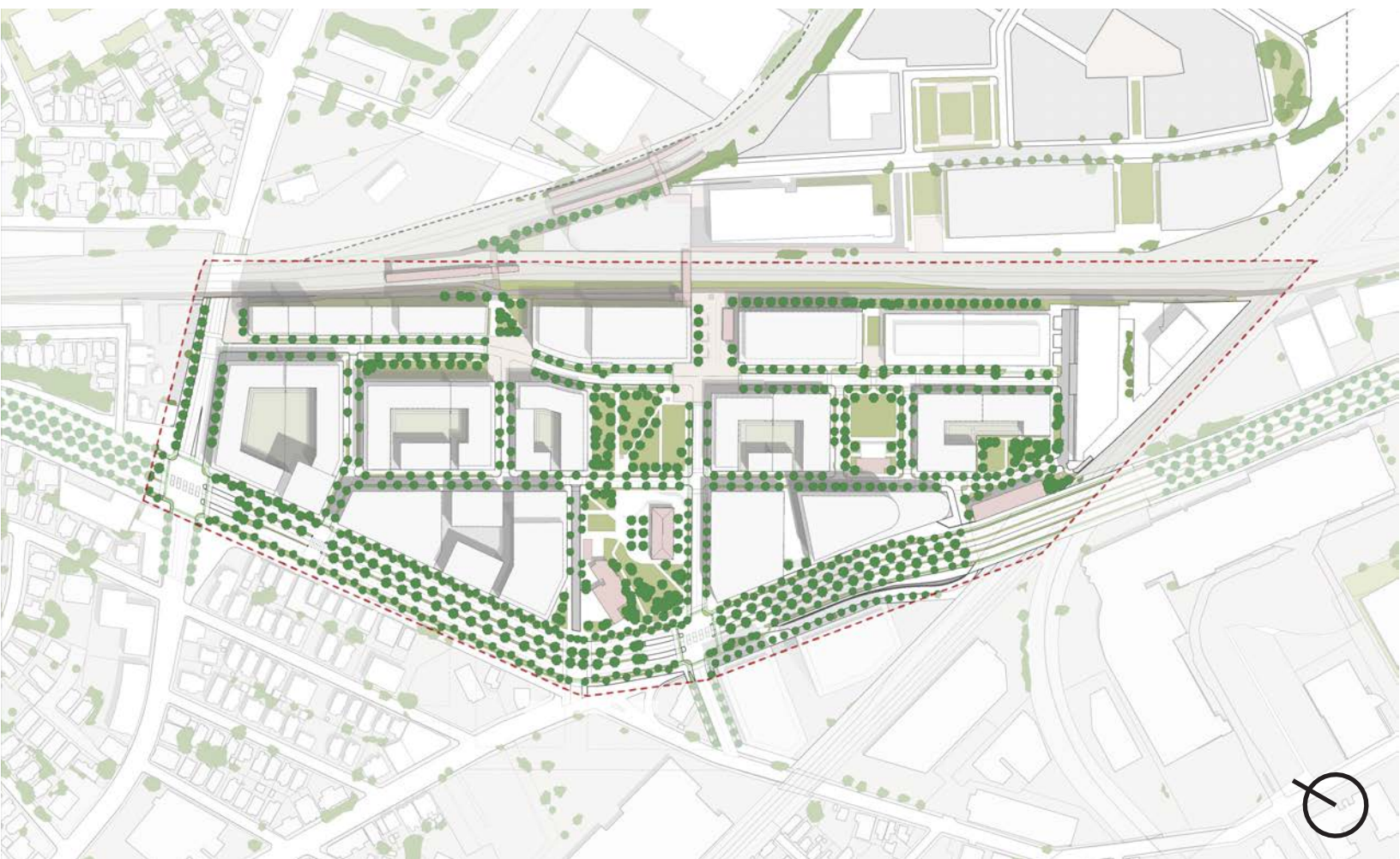
and commercial uses while maintaining its artistic and light industrial character. When creating a vibrant neighborhood, prioritizing pedestrians is crucial. Streetscapes should be designed using the Complete Streets approach to improve safety and access. Traffic calming measures and visually interesting elements will naturally encourage people to walk.



Existing civic spaces in an around Brickbottom.

Environmentally friendly design and the use of sustainability practices is a key priority for Brickbottom's urban design. Prioritizing solar orientation and natural light for creative workspaces will benefit both tenants and reduce energy use. Similarly, implementing the City's Urban Forest Management Plan in the neighborhood to introduce a robust tree canopy is particularly important to neighborhood design. Brickbottom has some of Somerville's lowest rates of tree

canopy coverage. Trees are infrastructure that enhance nearly every aspect of city life. They moderate extreme temperatures, improve air quality, manage rainwater to prevent pollution and flooding, calm traffic, raise property values, increase retail sales, provide pollinator and other wildlife habitat, and countless other environmental, economic, and public health benefits.



Potential new tree canopy.



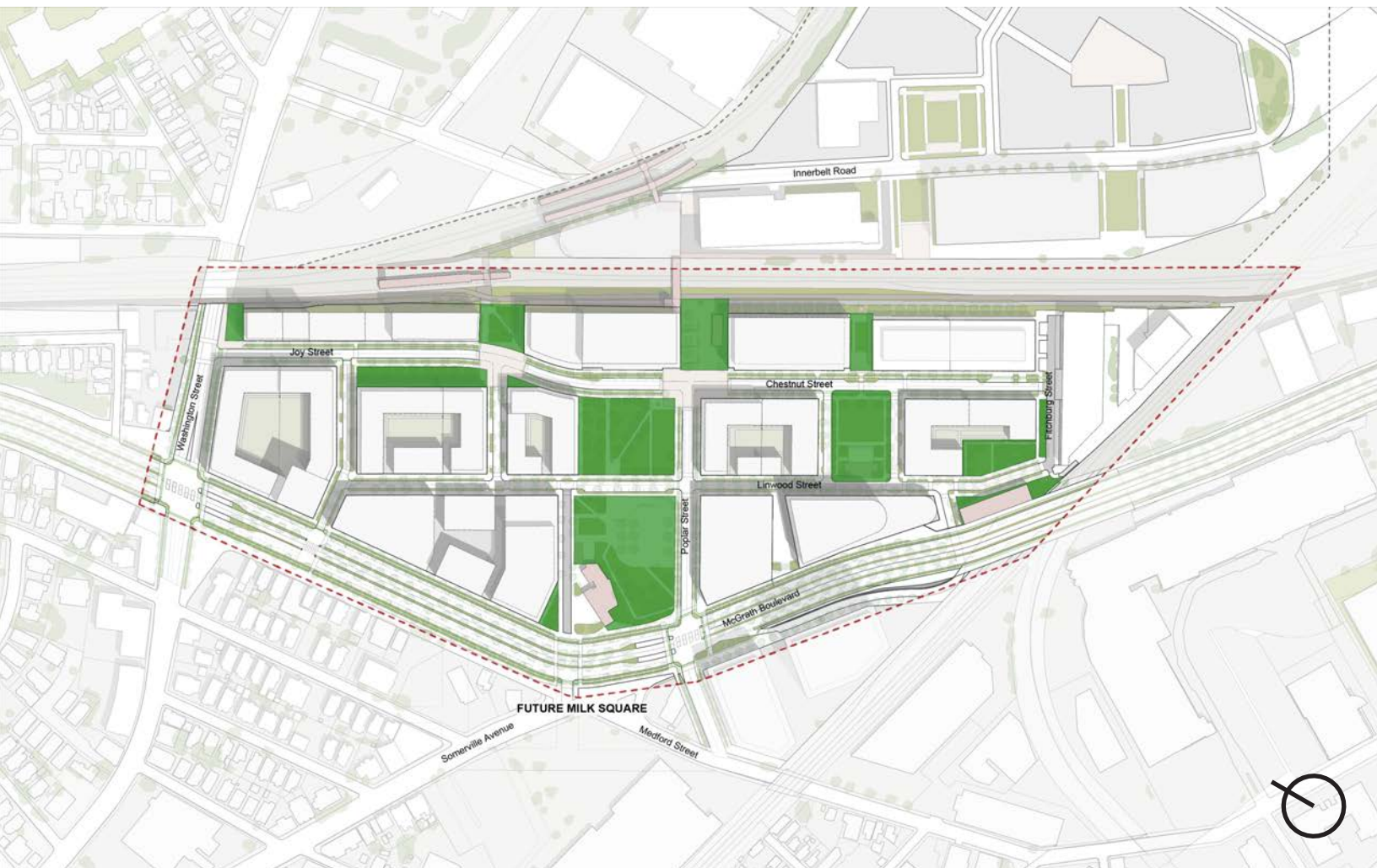
Existing block structure.



Proposed plan block structure. Red lines indicate current property boundaries.

Brickbottom needs a significant increase in open space to create a more inviting and healthier neighborhood. Currently, paved surfaces dominate Brickbottom, with little or no relief in many parts of the neighborhood. The creation of more open space is a top goal of Somerville's Open Space & Recreation Plan. To support this goal and create a fair distribution of open space to support the neighborhood, Brickbottom should target dedicating at least 20% of the land area to civic spaces and open space. Distributing plazas and parks

throughout the neighborhood will improve visual appeal, ecological functions, and build resiliency against climate change. Public spaces should be diverse, infused with art, welcoming to all, and collectively offer activities for people of all ages throughout the entire day. The creation of a network of public spaces in the neighborhood can meet the goals for recreation, arts, and the environment goals for the long term.

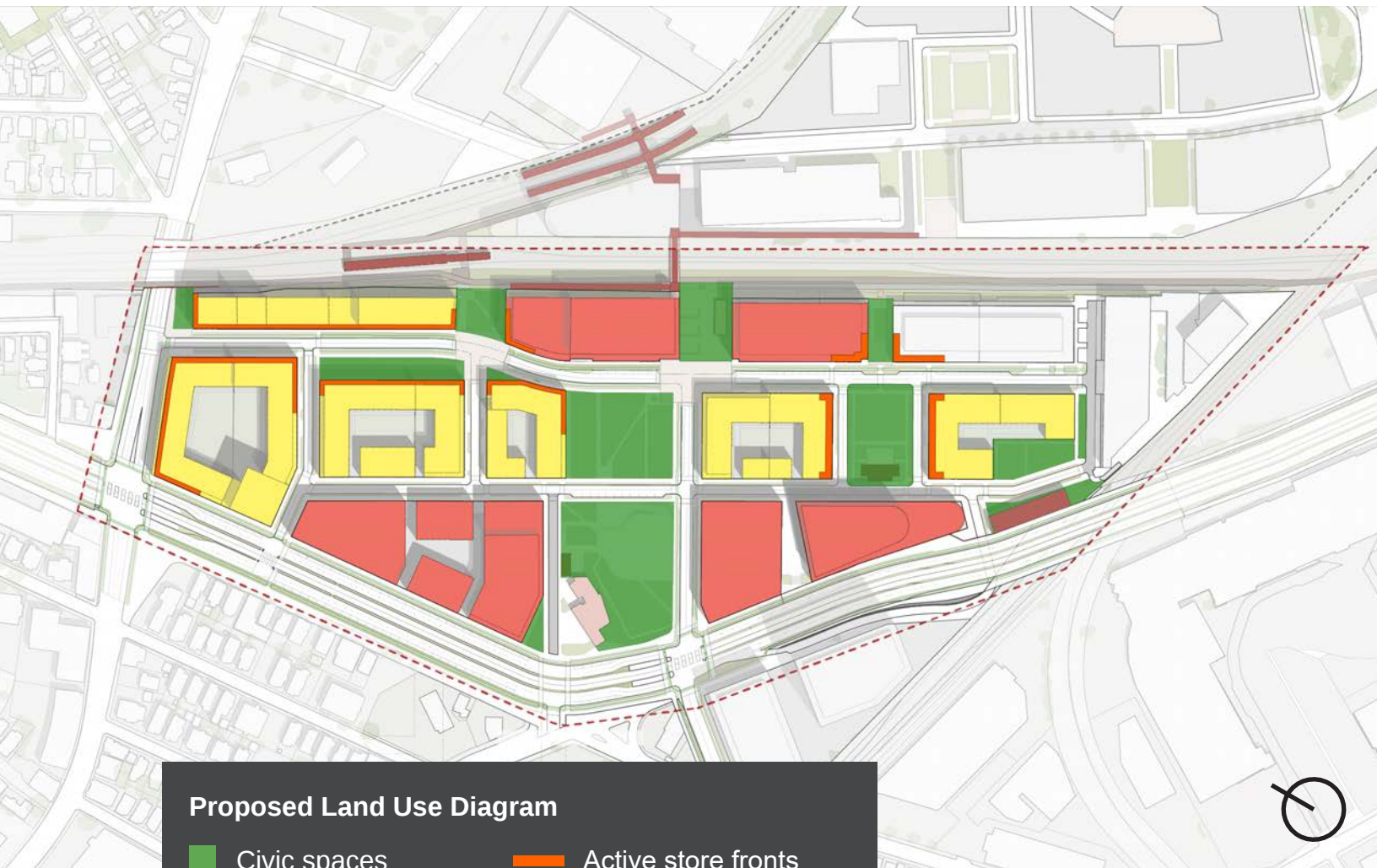


Civic space network, proposed vision.



Active street in the Wharf District, Washington D.C.

A thriving mixed-use development strategy, incorporating the goals for arts, economic development, and housing, is essential. Encouraging a mix of commercial uses alongside existing artist workspaces and light industrial areas will create a diverse economic landscape. The neighborhood should incorporate more office and research spaces to support further economic diversification and job growth but should not overwhelm the arts district focus. A range of residential uses will be necessary to support the neighborhood and its arts and business communities. Finding ways for commercial, creative, and residential uses to coexist and complement each other will be key to the neighborhood's mixed-use vision.



Proposed Land Use Diagram

- Civic spaces
- Active store fronts
- Commercial uses
- Residential or mixed uses

Building and urban design should respect the neighborhood's identity as an arts district and preserve the "funky vibe" of its existing buildings and industrial style. While new buildings should not try to duplicate or recreate historic structures, architecture can preserve the funky, industrial character of the area. There is room for a diversity of styles and design features, but within a spectrum of industrial buildings that honor Brickbottom's history.

Design should go beyond buildings to address entire sites and engagement with the streetscape, open spaces, and arts spaces. For example, accommodating performance spaces while ensuring compatibility with residential areas will be a crucial step in achieving Brickbottom's vision as an eclectic arts center. The goal is to create an iconic and recognizable arts district with a unique character that reflects the community.

Short Term Actions

1. Require or incentivize redevelopment of the neighborhood to create approximately five acres of new civic space.
2. Require or incentivize redevelopment of the neighborhood to be at least 20% Arts & Creative Enterprise commercial uses.
3. Require or incentivize redevelopment of the neighborhood to be at least 40% residential.
4. Require or incentivize redevelopment to break-up existing long blocks into shorter lengths that increase walkability.
5. Require any master-planned development proposals to identify ideal locations for Arts Exhibition uses, such as music venues, rehearsal space, comedy clubs, etc.
6. Require the Review Boards to consider the impacts of shadows from new development on the access to natural light of neighboring civic spaces and arts & creative uses.
7. Require the Review Boards to consider potential land use conflicts between abutting properties and uses within buildings for proposed master plans.
8. Identify and preserve any historic assets to encourage reuse rather than demolition.

Long-Term Changes

1. Ensure civic spaces are designed to be welcoming to the public so that all visitors are comfortable to sit and stay.
2. Create a variety of civic space types spread throughout the neighborhood to meet the various needs of people who live, work and visit Brickbottom.
3. Redesign each street to comply with the Complete Streets Ordinance and Bike Network Plan.
4. Include green infrastructure within new civic spaces and redesigned streetscape.
5. Follow the "right tree, right place" methodology of the Urban Forest Management Plan when selecting tree species for planting in civic spaces and as street trees.
6. Plant street trees in redesigned and newly created sidewalks and civic spaces in line with the Urban Forest Management Plan.

Design Guidelines

Historic precedents

There are two character-defining properties in Brickbottom that provide the foundation for the neighborhood's identity expressed in architectural form.

The first is the New England Baking Company building located at 66-68 Joy Street, built in 1919. The building, designed by L. S. Beardsley, is a mix of brick, stone, and concrete in typical industrial patterns of that time. This structure bridges the mill building types found throughout New England with simple brick facades organized with repetitively punched window openings and a predominantly concrete frame.

The second property is the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company Distribution Center, located at 1 Fitchburg Street, now known as the Brickbottom Artist Building. The building was designed by architect Howard Chapman and constructed in 1920. The building embodies much of what was typical of industrial buildings of that era - functional aesthetics with exposed materials and utilities, wide-open interior spaces, and access to abundant natural light.

These two buildings are both good examples of the industrial architecture that establishes a common design language for new development within the district. Just as old factories or warehouses have been successfully retrofitted into offices, labs, or apartments, the material palette and patterns offer Brickbottom a flexible set of design guidelines for new buildings that can accommodate various uses.

Modern Design

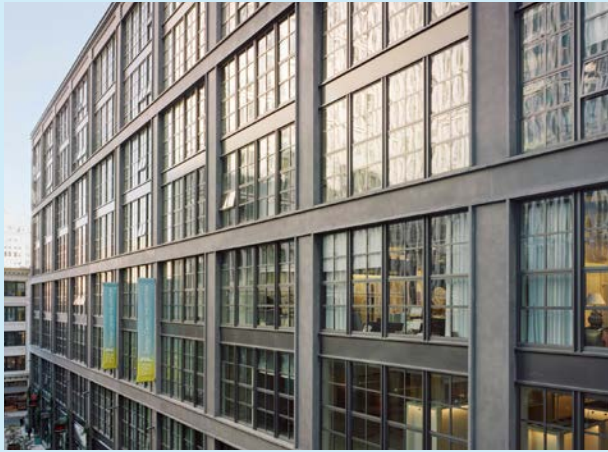
The term "industrial architecture" most frequently refers to the buildings that were developed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The design of factories changed from the original buildings of the industrial revolution as a response to the widespread use of new materials as well as new mass production methods. Concrete and metal became more prevalent, although brick was still heavily used. Builders and architects were forced to not only consider the function and production processes but also health and safety concerns for workers. For example, factory design revolves around optimizing production processes and ensuring worker safety and comfort via large metal grid windows for ample daylight while warehouse design focus on efficient storage, easy accessibility, and robust security. Modern industrial architecture encompasses various building types that can be used as reference or inspiration for new development regardless of the building's use.

Industrial architecture takes many forms, but some basic principles include:

- A blend of functionality and design
- Large, open floor plans for flexibility
- High ceilings – originally to accommodate equipment
- Use of exposed rough materials such as concrete, brick, or metal
- Large metal-grid windows
- Minimal ornamentation on the building façade
- Exposed ductwork and piping



Example of landscaped courtyard between building wings.



Example of large metal-grid windows.



Example of exposed materials.

Design Guidelines

The following design guidelines should be applied to development in Brickbottom in addition to the design guidelines of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance.

Massing

- Buildings should be shaped to create courtyards or forecourts to maximize natural light for interior spaces and to create outdoor work and open spaces.

Exterior Design

- Structural elements should have visible expression and celebrated as part of the facade design but should maintain thermal breaks between inside and out.
- Architectural bays should be spaced to accommodate large gridded and/or floor-to-ceiling windows, including combined or ganged windows, to maximize natural light.



Example of window placement from floor to ceiling.



Example of a facade with spandrel panels, projecting balconies, and changes in texture.

- Windows should align in a regular vertical and horizontal pattern for all stories as the primary element of facade design, with any irregularity corresponding only to building features, terminated vistas, or other unique elements.
- Spandrel panels above and below windows are encouraged.
- The use of materials, fenestration, and ornamentation should result in a minimalist design aesthetic.
- Materials should be selected for sustainability, durability, and aesthetics.
- The color of materials should be neutral earth tones or the inherent material color with brighter or darker accent colors.
- Building materials should be constructed of brick, concrete, metal, stucco, stone, tile, split-faced block, or siding.
- Exposed metal flashing or trim should be anodized or painted to blend with the exterior colors of the building.
- Wall materials should appear to be structurally supportive rather than an applied surface.

Access

- Loading and services should be located at the side or rear of buildings.
- Loading and service entrances should be designed to allow vehicles to pull entirely within the building.

4.4 Mobility

Brickbottom has felt isolated from the rest of Somerville for a very long time. One of the main challenges in creating a safe and easy way for people to get around Brickbottom is the limited connectivity to the rest of the city's street network. Existing physical infrastructure such as the rail right-of-way and a high-speed elevated McGrath Highway create barriers and safe options to enter or leave the neighborhood are limited. Currently, the neighborhood has only four entry and three exit points. Within Brickbottom, most streets lack proper sidewalks and are unsafe for cycling. The unusually long blocks (some over 1,000 feet long) create uncomfortable walking environments. Many lots have been fully paved with asphalt and lack sidewalks, so the entire side of these lots facing the street functions as one large driveway. The neighborhood discourages walking and biking in almost every way.

Creating connections to adjacent neighborhoods and surrounding areas is an essential goal of good urban design and is a key to the long-term success of Brickbottom. The Community Path and the

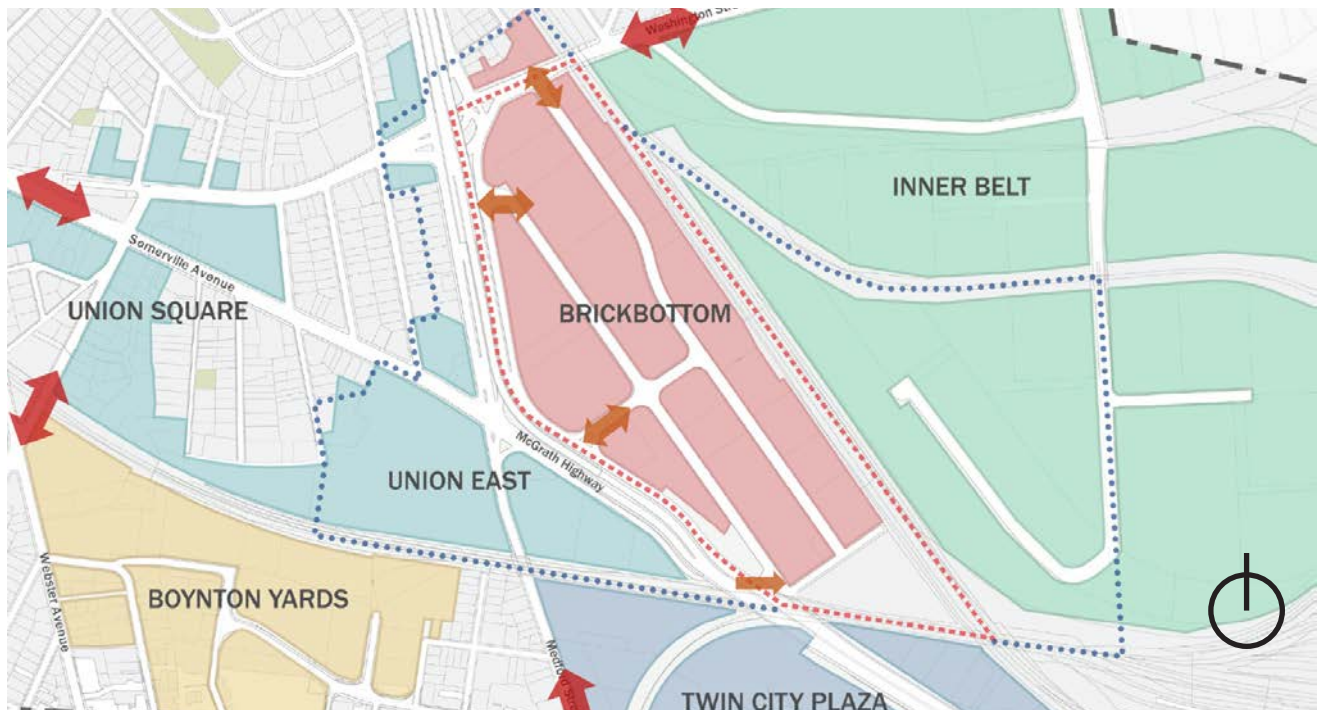
East Somerville Green Line Station have been important investments toward linking the neighborhood to the nearby Union Square, Inner Belt, and Boynton Yards employment centers. Longer-term projects are already underway but also involve significant infrastructure changes. The City is collaborating with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) on improvements to the Squires Bridge as part of the McGrath Highway Resurfacing project. The improvements will increase safety for all roadway users and create bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly environments without requiring full-scale reconstruction of the roadway. MassDOT is also making progress on the Grounding McGrath project to replace the elevated roadway with a multi-modal boulevard and funding is currently included in the state's capital investment plan for 2027. Continuing to expand connections and coordinate with local and state partners will be critical to accomplishing Brickbottom's neighborhood vision.

“Connect Brickbottom to surrounding neighborhoods and transit.”





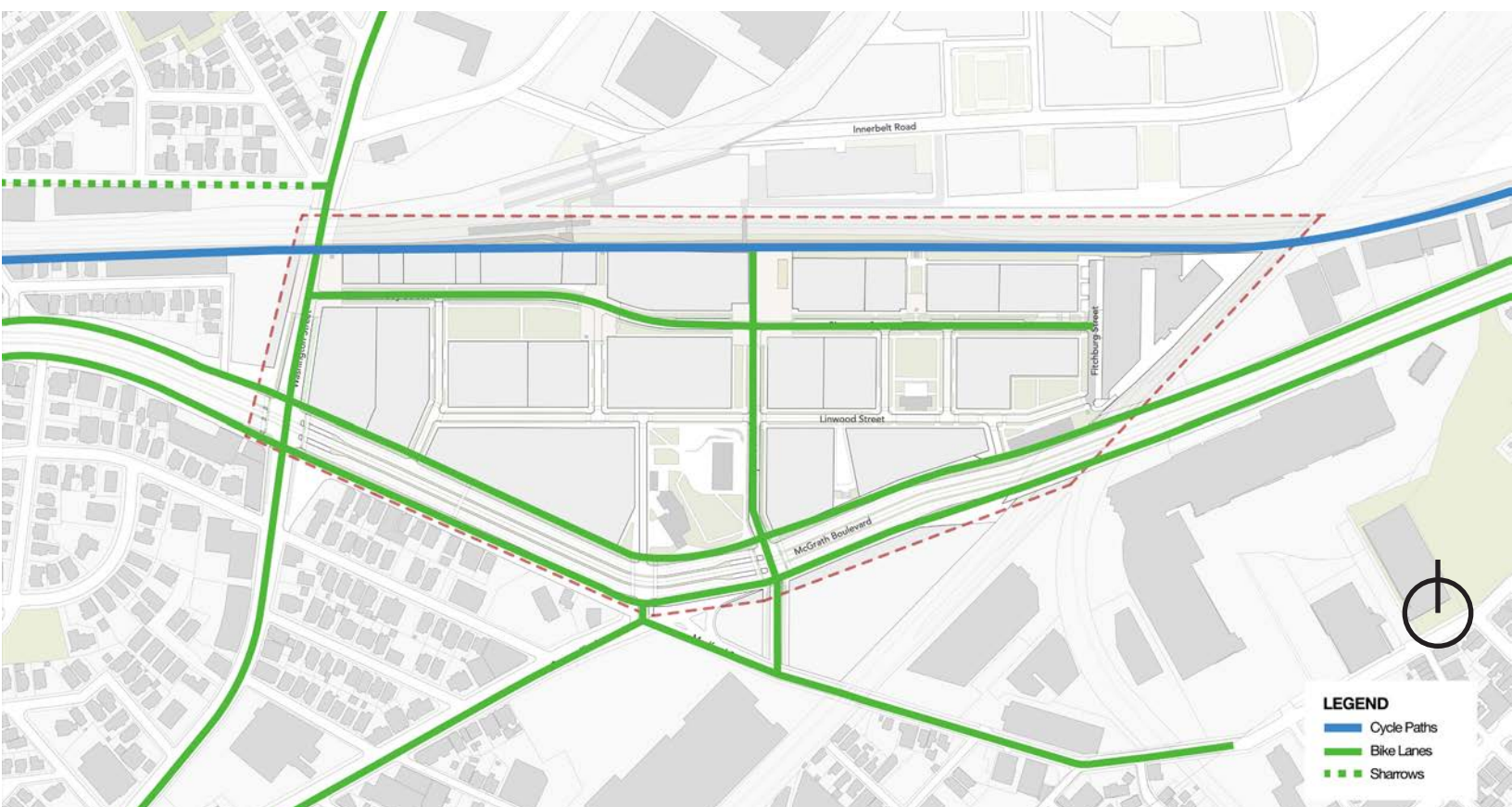
Brickbottom is currently surrounded by barriers like the MBTA ROW (left) and the elevated McGrath Highway (right), isolating the neighborhood from the rest of the city.



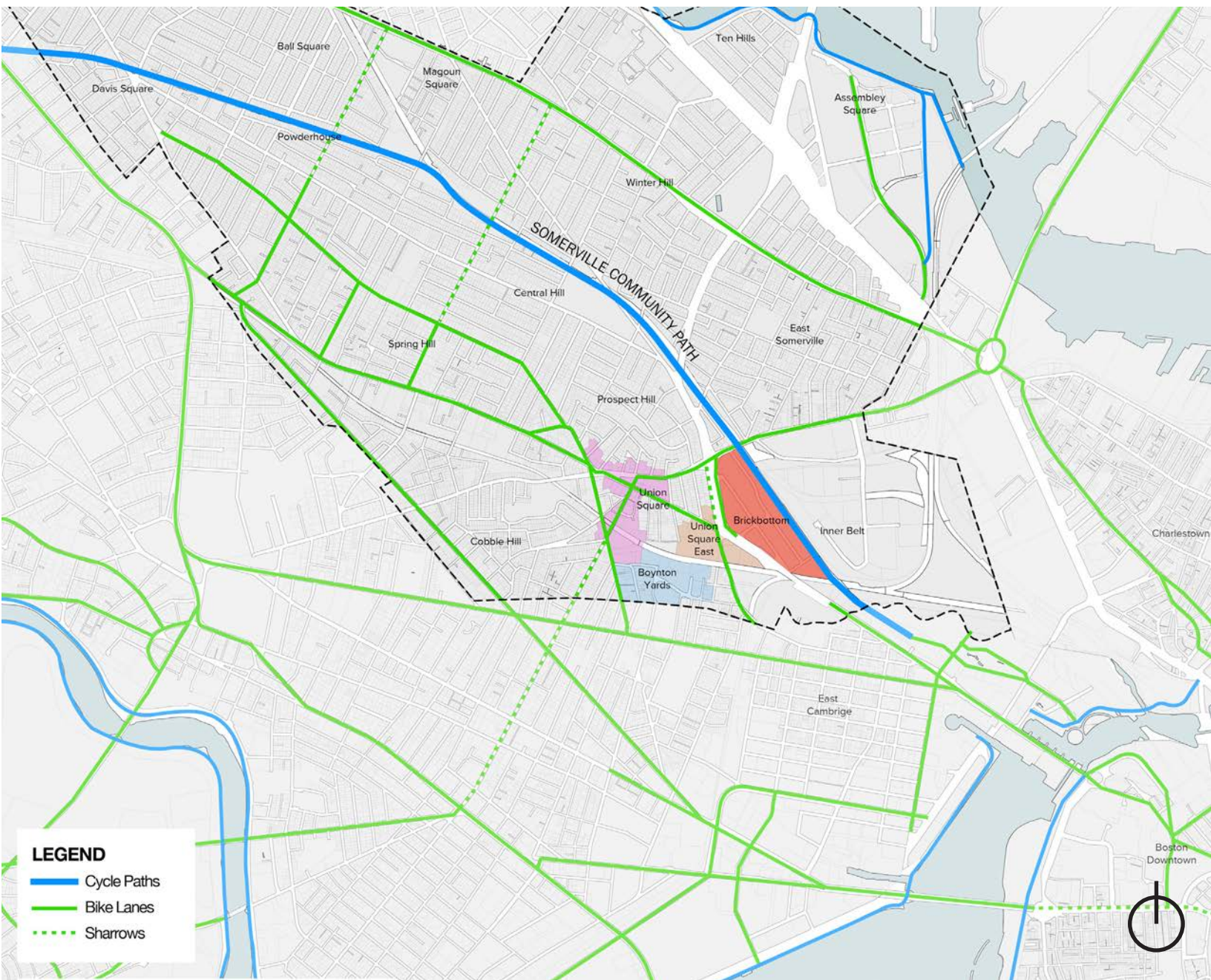
Brickbottom vehicular in-and-outs.

SomerVision 2040 sets a goal that 75% of work commutes must be by transit, walking, or biking – not by personal automobile – by 2040. It is critical to implement the City’s adopted Vision Zero Action Plan (www.somervillema.gov/departments/programs/vision-zero-somerville) and Bicycle Network Plan (www.voice.somervillema.gov/somerville-bicycle-network-plan) to achieve this goal. Two-way protected bike lanes are shown on Joy/Chestnut Street and Poplar Street to allow safe passage for cyclists amongst the cars accessing underground parking and trucks servicing large commercial buildings.

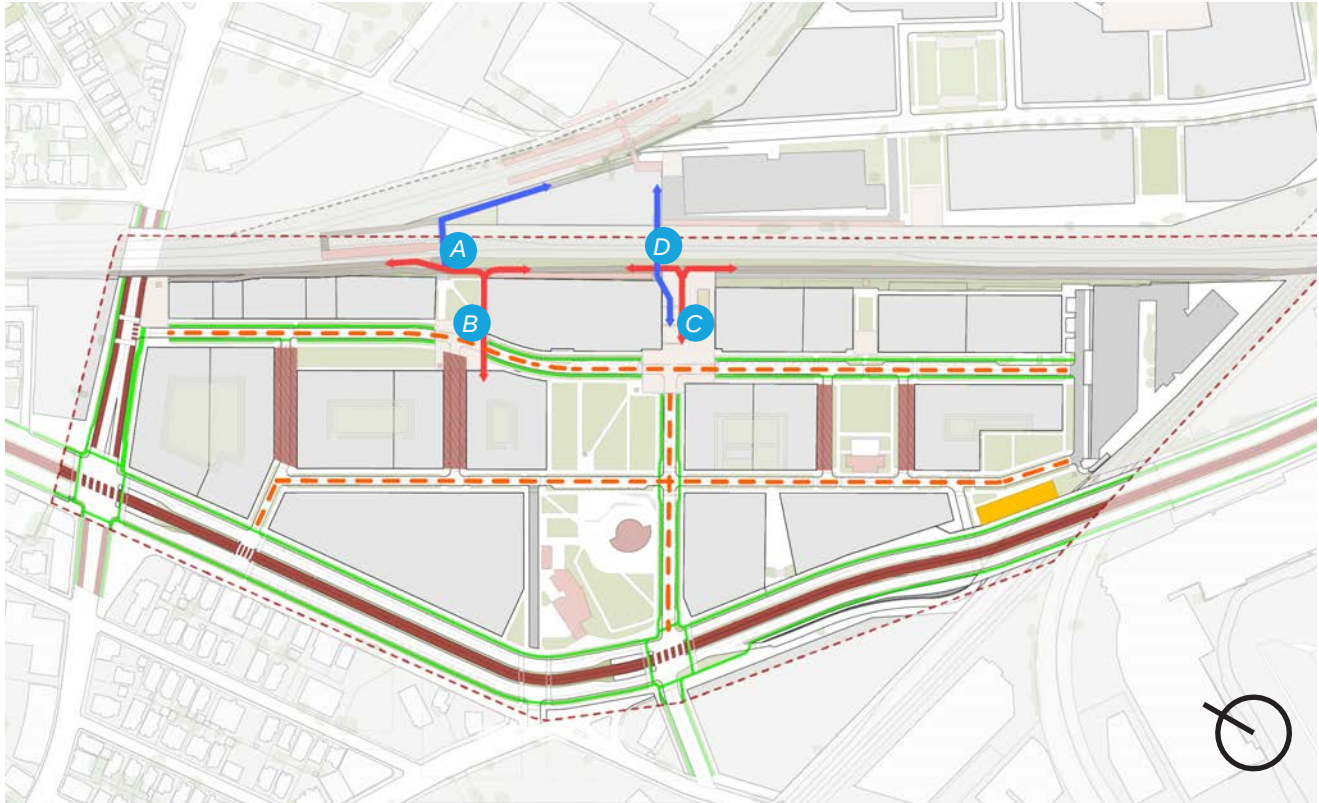
Building a safer and inviting environment for walking and biking often needs simple changes but requires attention to detail. For example, by ensuring that sidewalks crossing driveways remain at sidewalk level and do not dip down to street elevation, pedestrians and vehicles understand that someone walking has priority. New zoning for the neighborhood can set maximum block sizes for improved walkability and limit the number of curb cuts where conflicts between people and cars could occur. In the shorter term, “quick build” interventions can be used to slow traffic and improve safety for people walking and biking until full development occurs.



Improved neighborhood bike network.



Regional bike infrastructure.

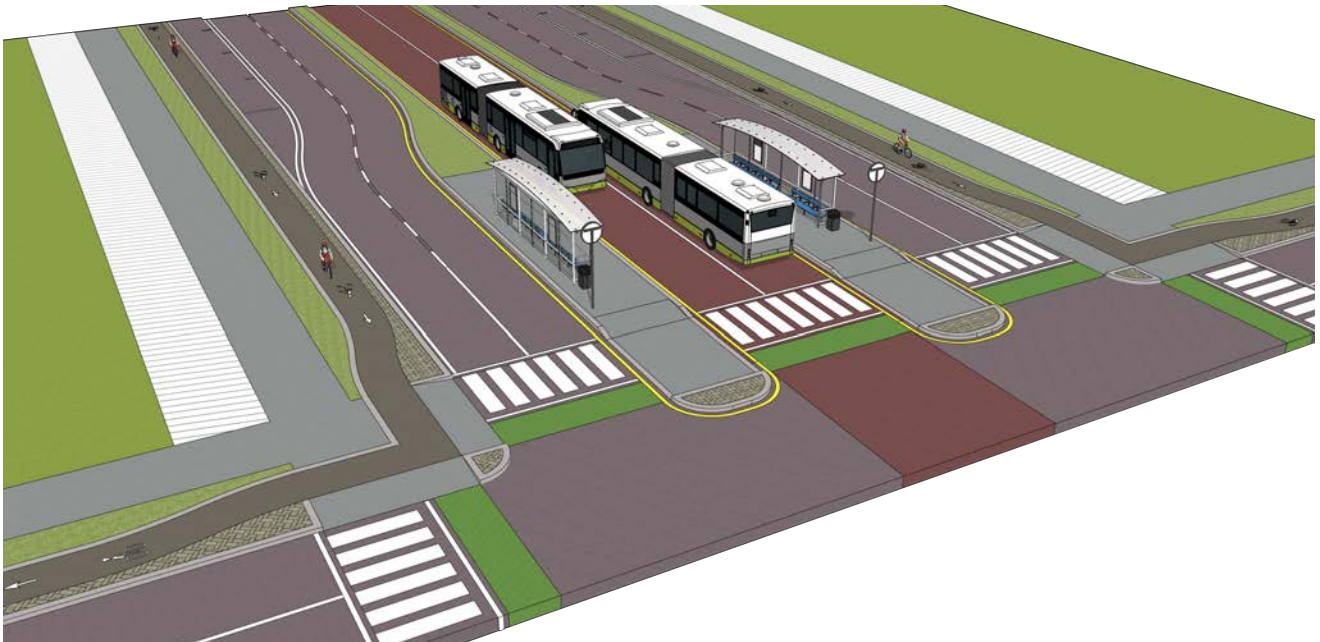


Community Path and Green Line Connections

- A. Potential new Community Path and Green Line Access off Joy Street: Creating an additional access point to the Green Line Station directly off Joy street would improve the service coverage of the station by decreasing the walking distance to the station entrance from the interior of Brickbottom. This path would also provide additional access to the Community Path and a potential connection across the rail tracks with Inner Belt through the Green Line Station.
- B. At-grade connection to Inner Belt from Brickbottom via Joy Street.
- C. Poplar Street connection to the Community Path: This would create a permeant connection to the Community Path from Poplar Street through the envision plaza at this point in the neighborhood. It's important to note that a temporary entrance currently exists at this location.
- D. Potential connection to Inner Belt over the rail tracks.



Example of BRT Boulevard proposed for Northern Los Angeles, California.



Future McGrath Boulevard with central rapid bus.



Current auto-oriented street in Brickbottom vs. a people-oriented street in the Wharf District in DC.



Concept design for Chestnut Street.



Concept design for secondary streets.

Parking policy is another important part of encouraging the use of alternate modes of transportation. A parking cap – a maximum number of spaces that may be developed – must be determined and regulated districtwide. In addition, any new parking structures should be underground, so opportunities for redevelopment and open space are protected. New development should be designed to encourage visitors, workers, and residents to use public transportation or to park once and walk around the neighborhood for increased interaction with the local businesses and civic spaces. Given the proximity to the

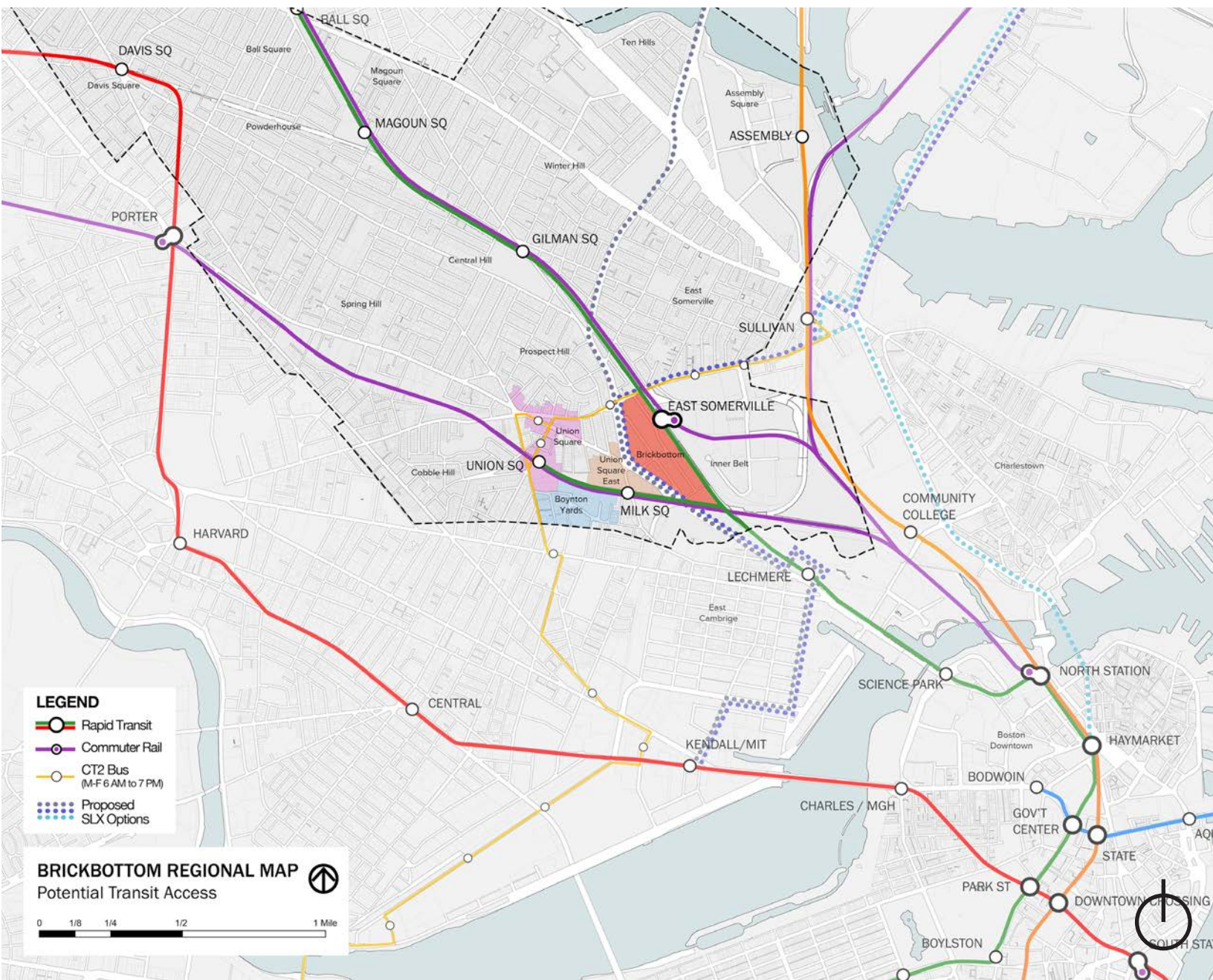
Community Path and the Green Line, residential development in Brickbottom should only include the absolute minimum amount of parking necessary to support residents of affordable and accessible units. A Transportation Management Association (TMA), could follow a similar model in use at Assembly Square to organize businesses and local government to improve transportation options in a specific area, and would help coordinate parking resources across the neighborhood.

Short-Term Action

1. Install interim, quick-build traffic calming interventions to improve pedestrian safety.
2. Establish a parking maximum for redevelopment.
3. Require or incentivize any new parking to be underground, structured, commercial parking facilities.
4. Collaborate with the MBTA to implement the approved Bus Network Redesign plan to ensure routes serve the Brickbottom neighborhood.
5. Collaborate with the MBTA to implement the Silver Line Extension project connecting Logan Airport and Chelsea to Kendall Square via Sullivan Square and Washington Street.
6. Collaborate with MassDOT to redesign McGrath Highway into a multi-modal, pedestrian-friendly urban boulevard.
7. Collaborate with MassDOT to redesign the Squires Bridge and improve pedestrian access and safety to areas south of Brickbottom.

Long Term Change

1. Create new pedestrian and bicycle connections between Brickbottom and the community path, East Somerville Green Line station, and the Inner Belt neighborhood.
2. Remove or consolidate unnecessary curb cuts and connect sidewalks currently interrupted by existing curb cuts.
3. In addition to the baseline transportation demand management programs and services, new developments should provide real-time arrival signage for rail and bus transit serving Brickbottom.
4. Establish a Transportation Management Association to serve the Brickbottom neighborhood.
5. Explore the feasibility of an infill Commuter Rail station serving Brickbottom and Inner Belt.



Potential transit access enhancement.

4.5 Housing

Brickbottom has a significant opportunity to contribute to the city's SomerVision2040 goals for housing production. As new housing is developed in the neighborhood, portions should be set aside as artist housing and some buildings should provide live-work units. Brickbottom is already home to the Brickbottom's Artist Building, the first of its kind in Somerville. While not a common type of housing, this style of the Artist Building is particularly appealing to artists, other creatives and makers. With living and working spaces being close together, it can create a stimulating environment that fosters creativity and productivity. This can be

beneficial for creatives and makers who may benefit from the ease of switching between work mode and inspiration. Flexibility for other unit types, beyond live-work, should be provided, as some artists may prefer separate dwelling units from their workspace. However, certain buildings should have dedicated shared working areas, and a range of unit types should be supported throughout the neighborhood. Artist housing will be available to those who are certified through the Somerville Arts Council's certified artist program.



Example of a narrow lot, single-loaded corridor residential building.

High-density residential development close to the East Somerville T Station will help the neighborhood transform into a fully mixed-use environment with convenient access to everyday essentials including shops, eateries, workspace, and civic spaces. As with all residential development, a range of unit sizes, in floor area and number of bedrooms, will be needed in each new building to meet

the varied needs of new residents. This will help foster the desired complete neighborhood by creating a vibrant, more connected community, where residents can easily run errands, grab a bite to eat, head to work, or enjoy neighborhood events.

Short Term Actions

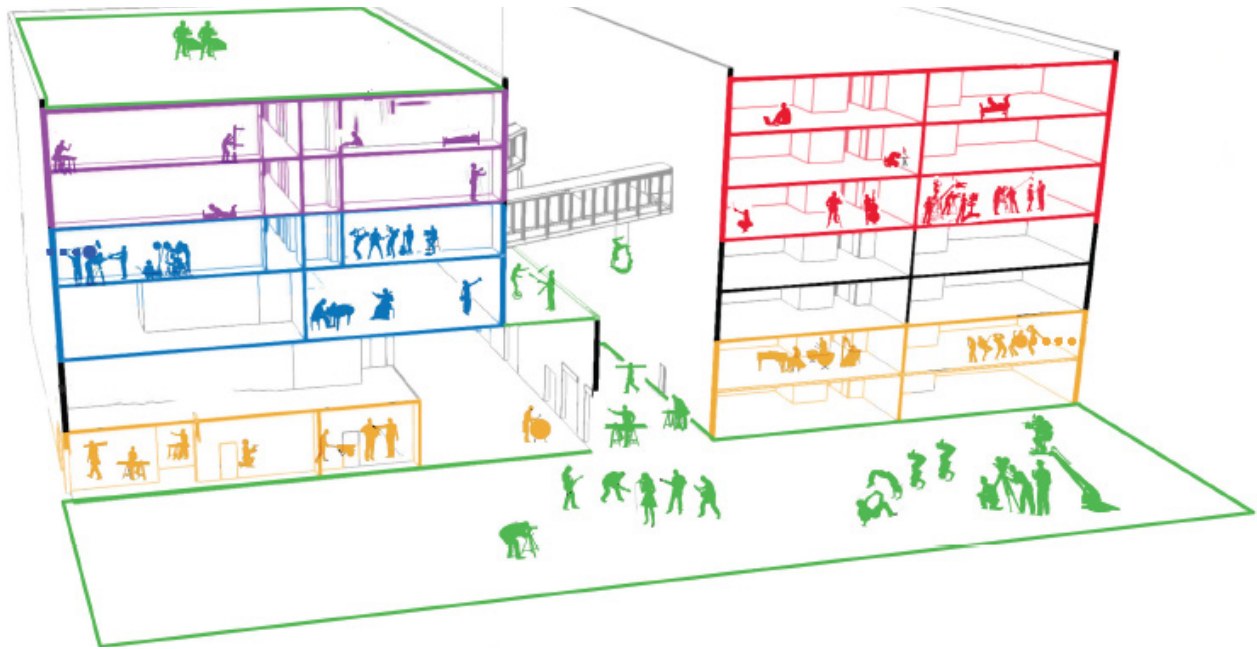
1. Create a certified artist housing use within the Residential Housing use category in zoning and permit artist housing in Brickbottom.
2. Require or incentivize redevelopment to provide a minimum percentage of new residential uses as artist housing.
3. Require or incentivize redevelopment to provide a minimum percentage of new dwelling units as live-work units.
4. Require or incentivize the creation of a variety of dwelling unit sizes to accommodate the diverse household sizes and life stages of Somerville residents at all income levels.

Long-Term Changes

1. Concentrate residential uses within the central block of Brickbottom between Joy/Chestnut Street and Linwood Street and near the East Somerville Green Line Station.



“We need to sustain a community that is creative and diverse.”



Example of live-work unit arrangements (above) and example of residential building (below).





Active street in the Wharf District, Washington, D.C.



Joy Street Studios entrance.



5. Key Areas

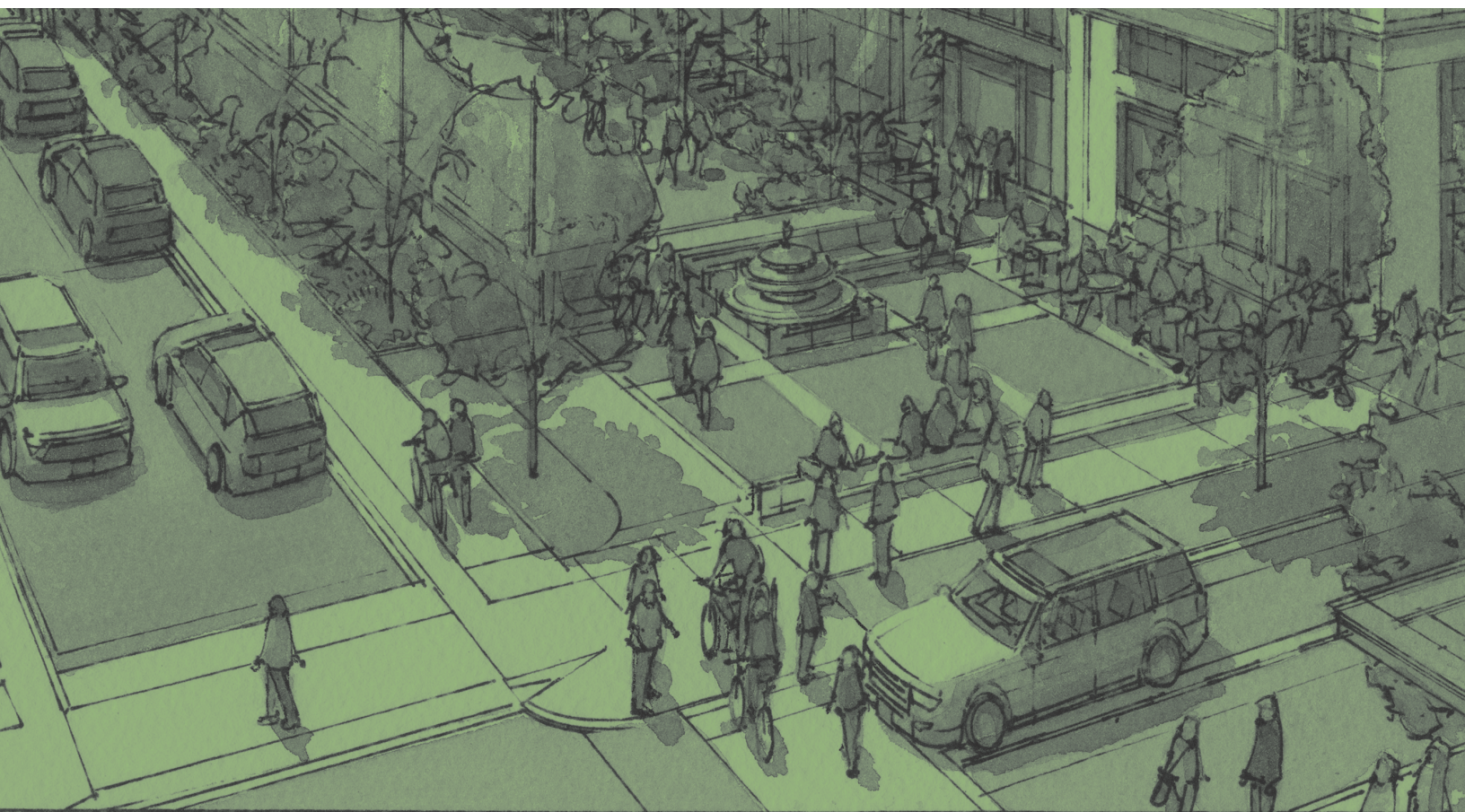
Area 1: Access at Washington and Joy Streets

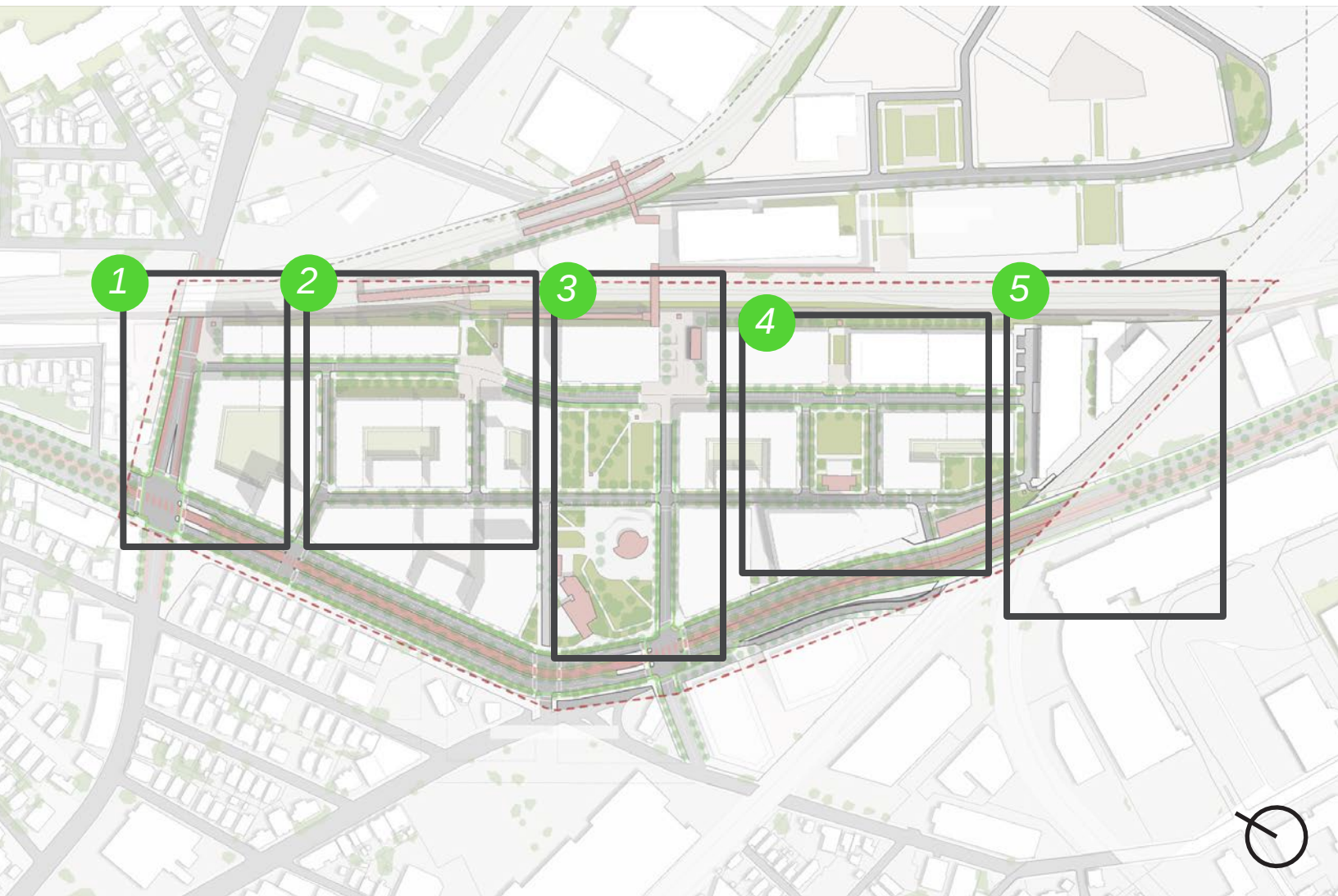
Area 2: A New Joy Street

Area 3: Poplar Street Corridor

Area 4: Chestnut Street Corridor

Area 5: Fitchburg and Linwood Streets





Brickbottom Key Areas

1. Washington Street
2. Joy Street
3. Poplar Street
4. Chestnut Street
5. Fitchburg and Linwood Streets

The green map marker symbol serves as a reference point, appearing in the same location on corresponding maps and photos throughout this chapter.

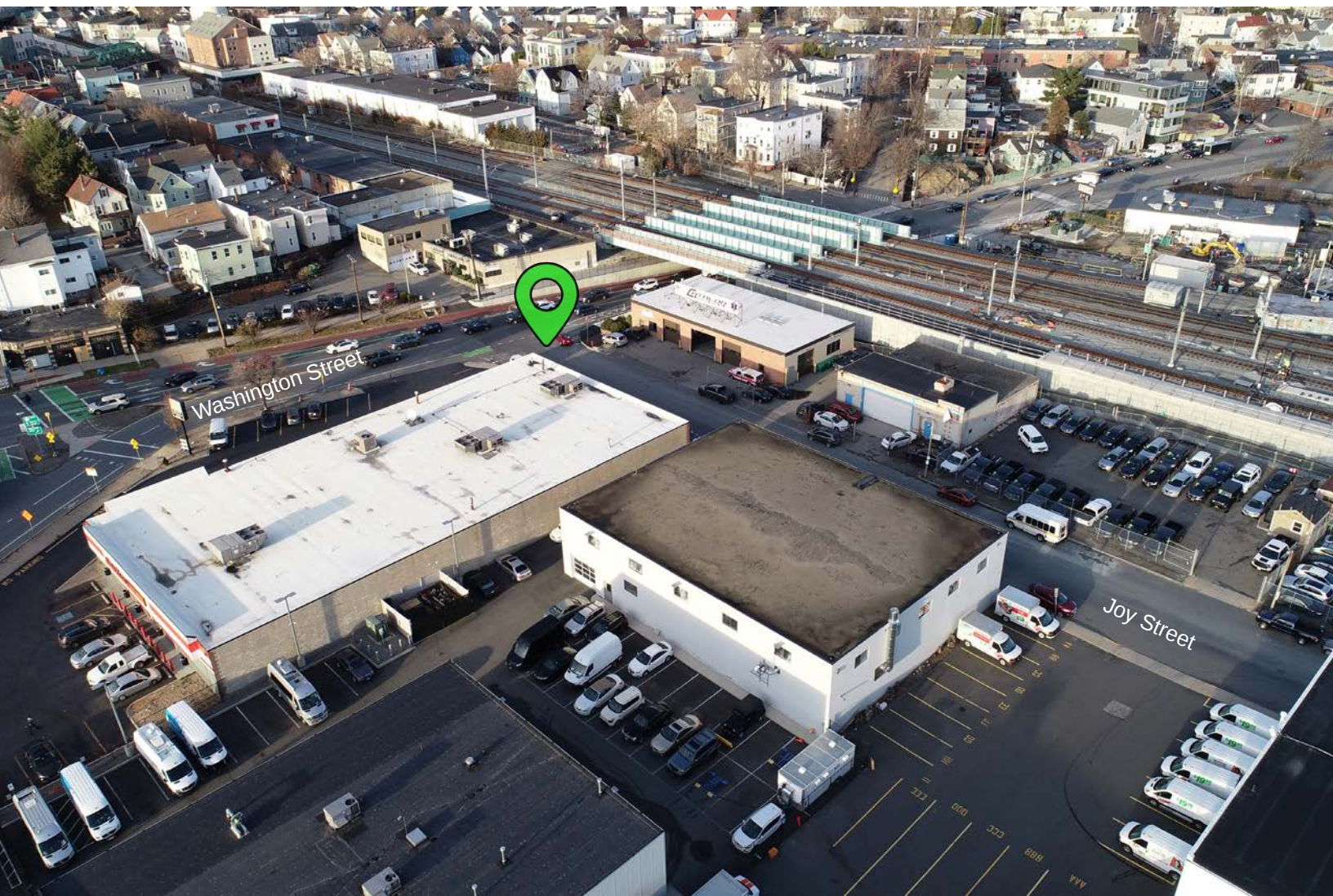


Area 1: Washington Street

The intersection of Joy Street with Washington Street serves as the main access point into Brickbottom. New construction is envisioned to create a welcoming plaza for people arriving by train, bus, bicycle, or on foot. This new

plaza should be designed to provide clear, visible access to the East Somerville Green Line station and Somerville Community Path and the site should include public art to serve as a welcoming landmark.





View of the current conditions of the intersection of Joy and Washington Streets.

Due to the number of vehicles on Washington Street and people using the ramp to enter the East Somerville Green Line station and Somerville Community Path, the intersection of Washington and Joy Streets will need new crosswalk. The further evolution of Washington Street to accommodate all modes of travel safely and the final design of the intersection will depend heavily on the potential extension of the Silver Line currently being analyzed by the MBTA. Additionally, multiple bus routes pass Brickbottom along Washington Street, making the intersection and new plaza an ideal location for a transfer stop between the various buses, East Somerville Green Line station, and the Community Path.

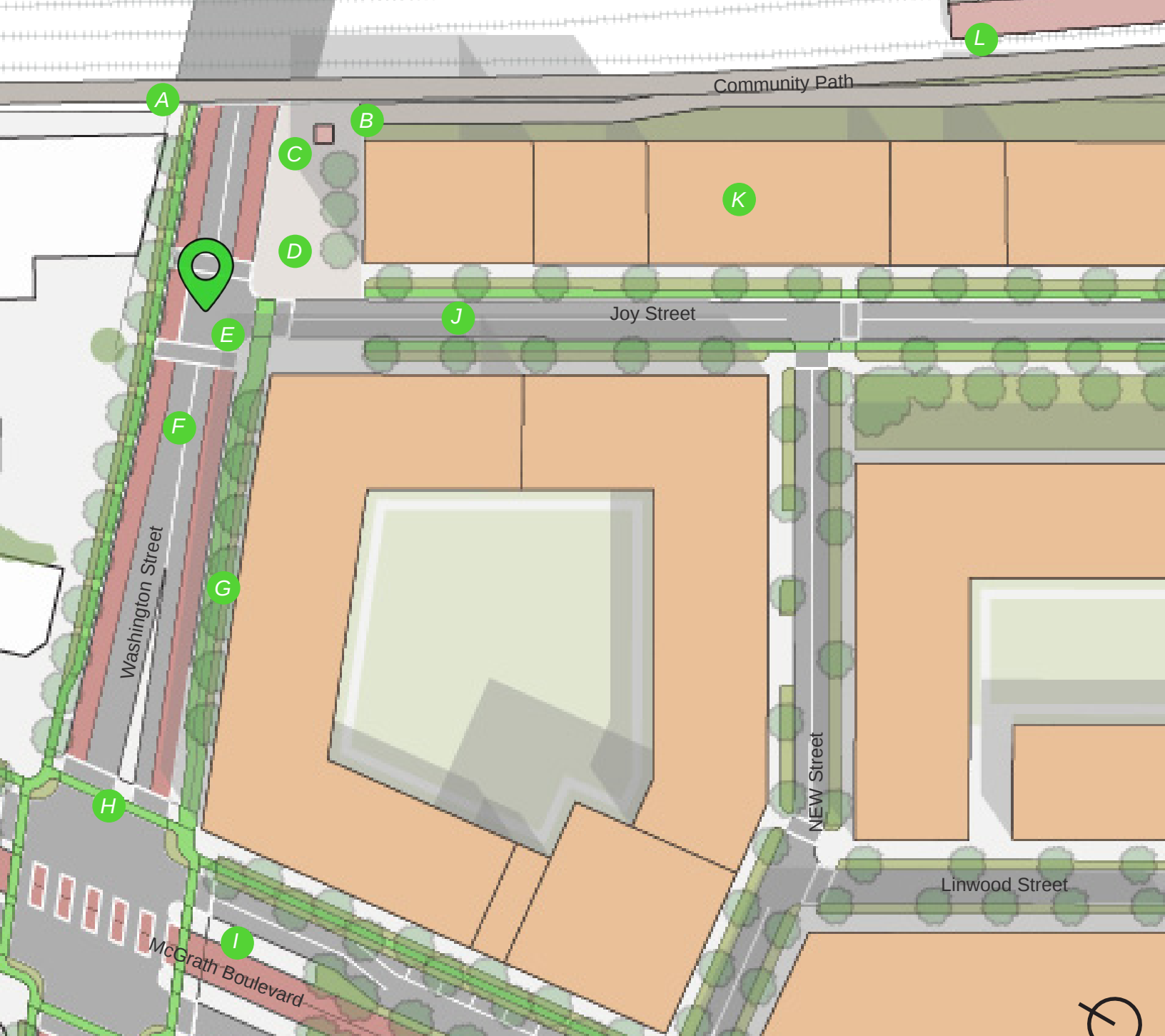
New upper-story residential uses should be prioritized near the East Somerville Green Line station with new buildings along Washington Street providing ground-story commercial space for uses that meet the needs of residents and add life to the new plaza. New buildings should be built further away from the street to create wide sidewalks that allow the redesign of Washington Street to accommodate separated bicycle lanes and plenty of street tree plantings.

Short Term Actions

1. Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new plaza with a public art feature at the intersection of Joy Street and Washington Street.
2. Require wide sidewalks along Washington Street.

Long-Term Changes

1. Redesign the Washington Street and Joy Street intersection.
2. Locate new residential buildings along Washington Street near the East Somerville station of the Green Line.



Washington Street Points of Interest and Design Recommendations

- A. Community Path Extension passing over Washington Street.
- B. Access ramp up to the new MBTA Green Line station and the Community Path from Washington Street.
- C. Potential location of an art piece to serve both as welcoming landmark to Brickbottom and to the new MBTA station.
- D. Plaza to serve as gateway for the neighborhood, MBTA station and Community Path.
- E. Improved intersection at Joy Street and Washington Street, with new pedestrian crosswalks and better distributed street space for bikes and pedestrians.
- F. Bus lane for a potential new Silver Line or other rapid bus service on Washington Street.
- G. Increased set-back of the southern parcels along Washington Street to provide more sidewalk space and better view of the station access and plaza.
- H. Left-turn lane to McGrath Boulevard.
- I. Multi-modal McGrath Boulevard with space for rapid bus service, new tree canopy, and bike lanes.
- J. New streetscape design for Joy Street to include segregated bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and new tree canopy.
- K. Avoid additional setbacks on the parcels between Joy Street and the MBTA right-of-way to maintain developable depth.



Bird's-eye view of the vision for Washington Street at its intersection with Joy Street. The Green Line and Community Path are visible in the foreground.



Street level view of the potential vision for the intersection of Washington and Joy Streets.

Area 2: Joy Street

Future construction along Joy Street should take on the character of higher density, taller, mixed-use buildings than what is expected elsewhere in the neighborhood. Throughout the planning process, participants routinely favored concentrating development intensity near the East Somerville Green Line station. Most parcels fronting either side of Joy

Street are best suited for corridor buildings that surround a courtyard or longer buildings along that shallow lots backing onto the Community Path. Either type should be loaded with apartments on the upper stories.





View of the current conditions of Joy Street with the new Green Line station showing on the right.

To meet the broader urban design and mobility objectives of this plan, Joy Street should be redesigned as a complete street with separated bike lanes, wide sidewalks, and new street trees.

The wiggle in Joy Street and change in elevation between Joy Street and Linwood Street presents an interesting opportunity to create a new greenway or other type of linear civic space at the curve in the street. By constructing buildings along the western side of Joy Street back from the street, this new space would create a point of visual interest, making it another potential location for public art that could serve as a focal point of the area.

At either end of the new park, new cross streets connecting Joy Street to Linwood

Street would help to reduce the existing long block length. New buildings on this block would front onto the new linear park, slope down the new cross streets, and have an additional story along Linwood Street.

The entrance ramp to the East Somerville Green Line Station is over 600 feet from the intersection of Washington and Joy Street. A second and more direct access point to the East Somerville Green Line Station and Somerville Community Path from within Brickbottom would greatly benefit everyone by reducing the walking time for people. The access could be provided along Joy Street by creating a pocket plaza or park where the design of the space itself navigates the change in elevation.

Alternative

Given land acquisition challenges, several alternatives are suggested for the location of civic spaces in this plan. Implementation will require close collaboration with property owners and the City to deliver the proposed redevelopment possibilities.

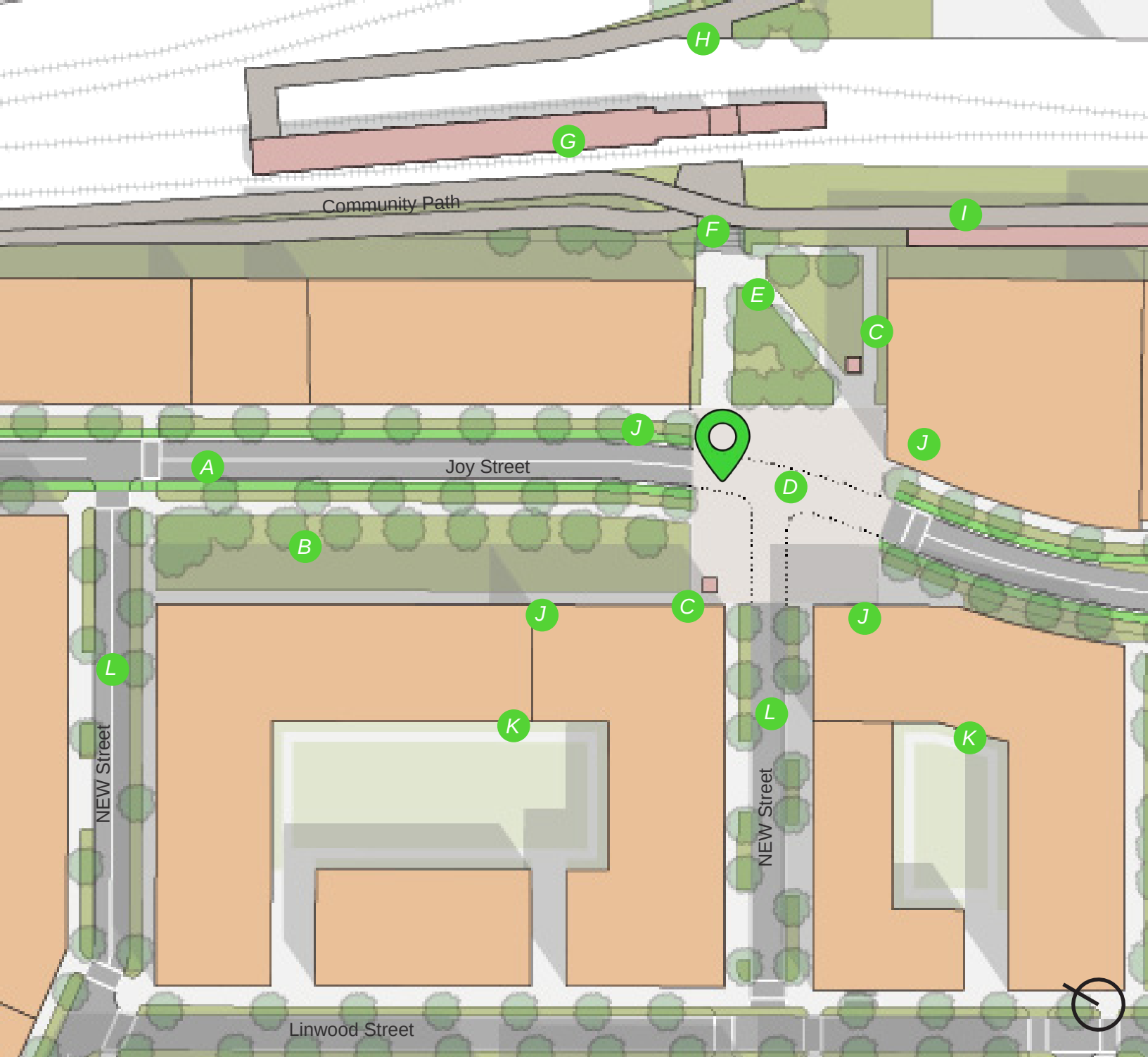
If other proposed civic space locations encounter feasibility issues, the linear park proposed along Joy Street could be extended all the way to Washington Street rather than beginning one block into Brickbottom to maintain the overall civic space goals of this plan.

Short Term Actions

1. Require or incentivize redevelopment to reduce block size by introducing new streets connecting Joy Street to Linwood Street.
2. Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new greenway or linear park along Joy Street.

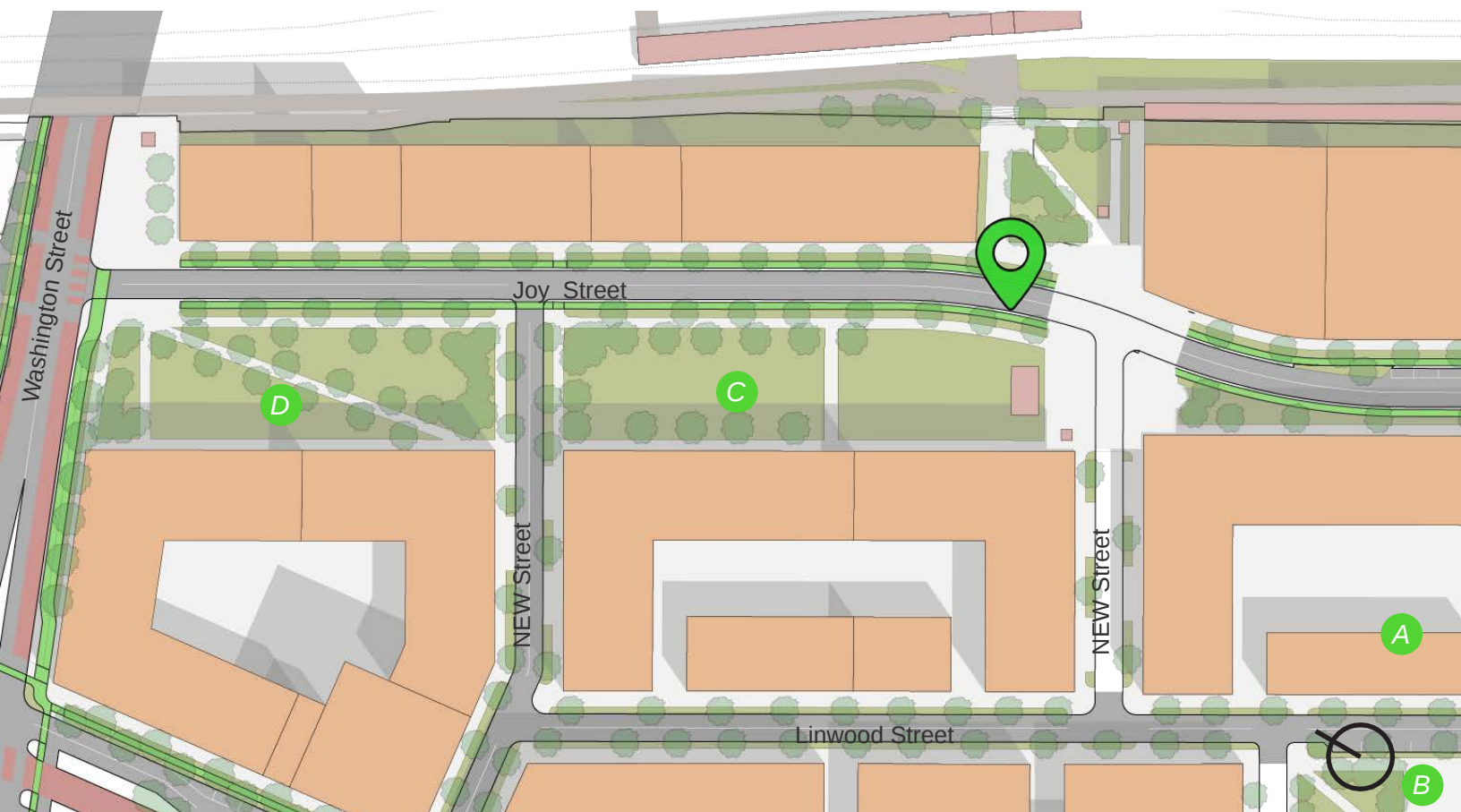
Long-Term Changes

1. Redesign Joy Street into a complete street.
2. Create an access point for pedestrians connecting Joy Street to the East Somerville Green Line Station and the Somerville Community Path.
3. Concentrate new residential development along Joy Street near the East Somerville station of the Green Line.



Joy Street Points of Interest and Design Recommendations

- A. New streetscape design for Joy Street to include segregated bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and new tree canopy.
- B. New neighborhood park along Joy Street.
- C. Potential location of public art.
- D. Raised intersection for traffic calming and to connect open spaces.
- E. New park next to a new potential access to the MBTA Green Line station and Community Path.
- F. Potential new access up to the Green line Station and the Community Path. Terrain difference would require stairs and ramp.
- G. MBTA East Somerville Green Line station access.
- H. Potential connection to Inner Belt and access to the MBTA Station.
- I. Ramp up a potential new pedestrian bridge to cross over the MBTA tracks and connect to Inner Belt.
- J. Active storefronts around parks and plazas.
- K. Buildings on the west side of Joy Street to retain the terrain elevation difference between Joy and Linwood streets.
- L. New thoroughfares to break up the block size and increase walkability.



Joy Street Open Space Alternative

- A. No central green space.
- B. ArtFarm.
- C. Larger version of the proposed park on Joy Street increasing in width, reducing abutting parcels size.
- D. Joy Street park extending all the way to Washington Street.



Bird's-eye view of the vision for a park along Joy Street.



View from the potential secondary access to the Community Path and Green Line Station mid-block along Joy Street, opening to the new park.

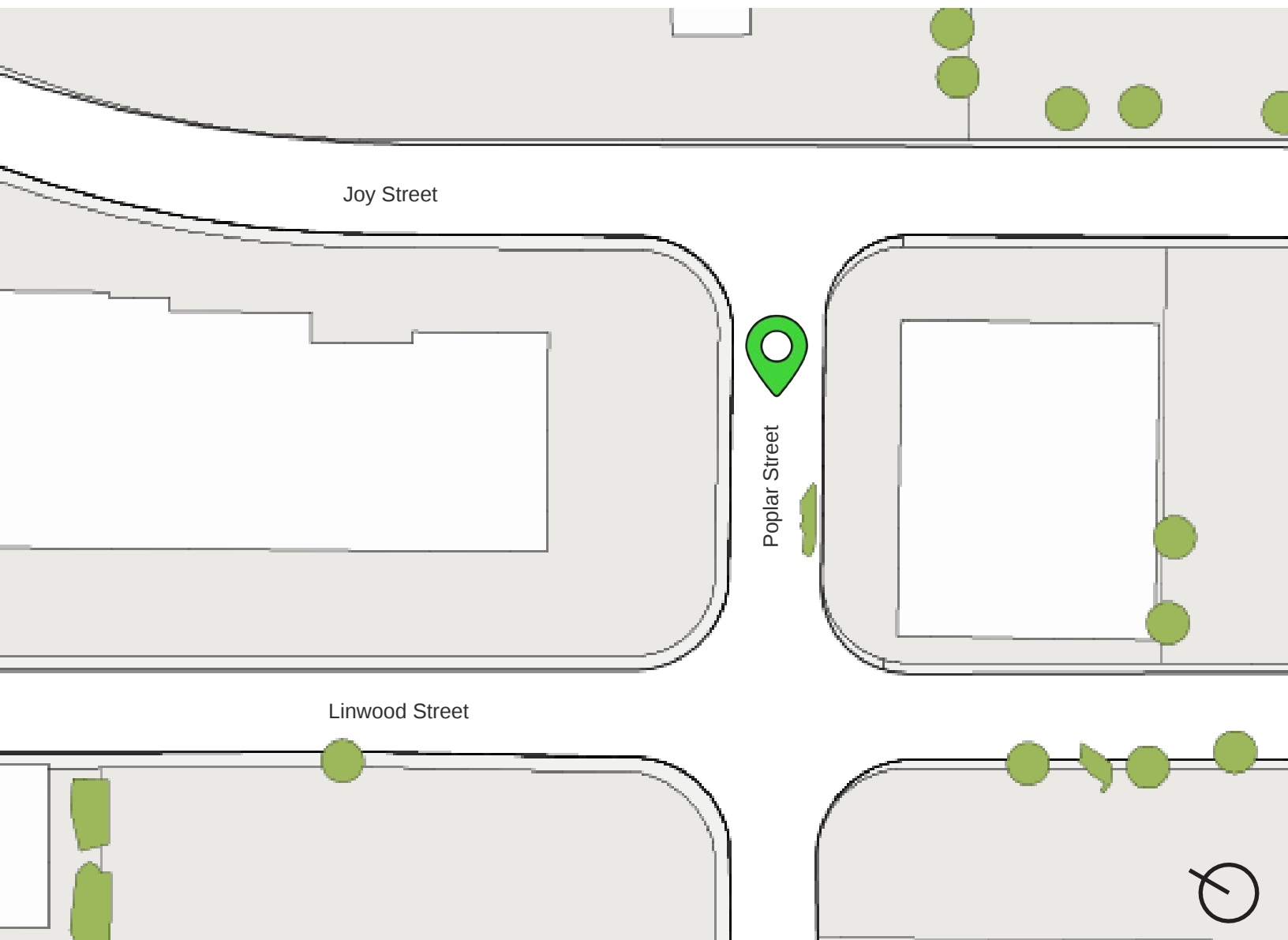


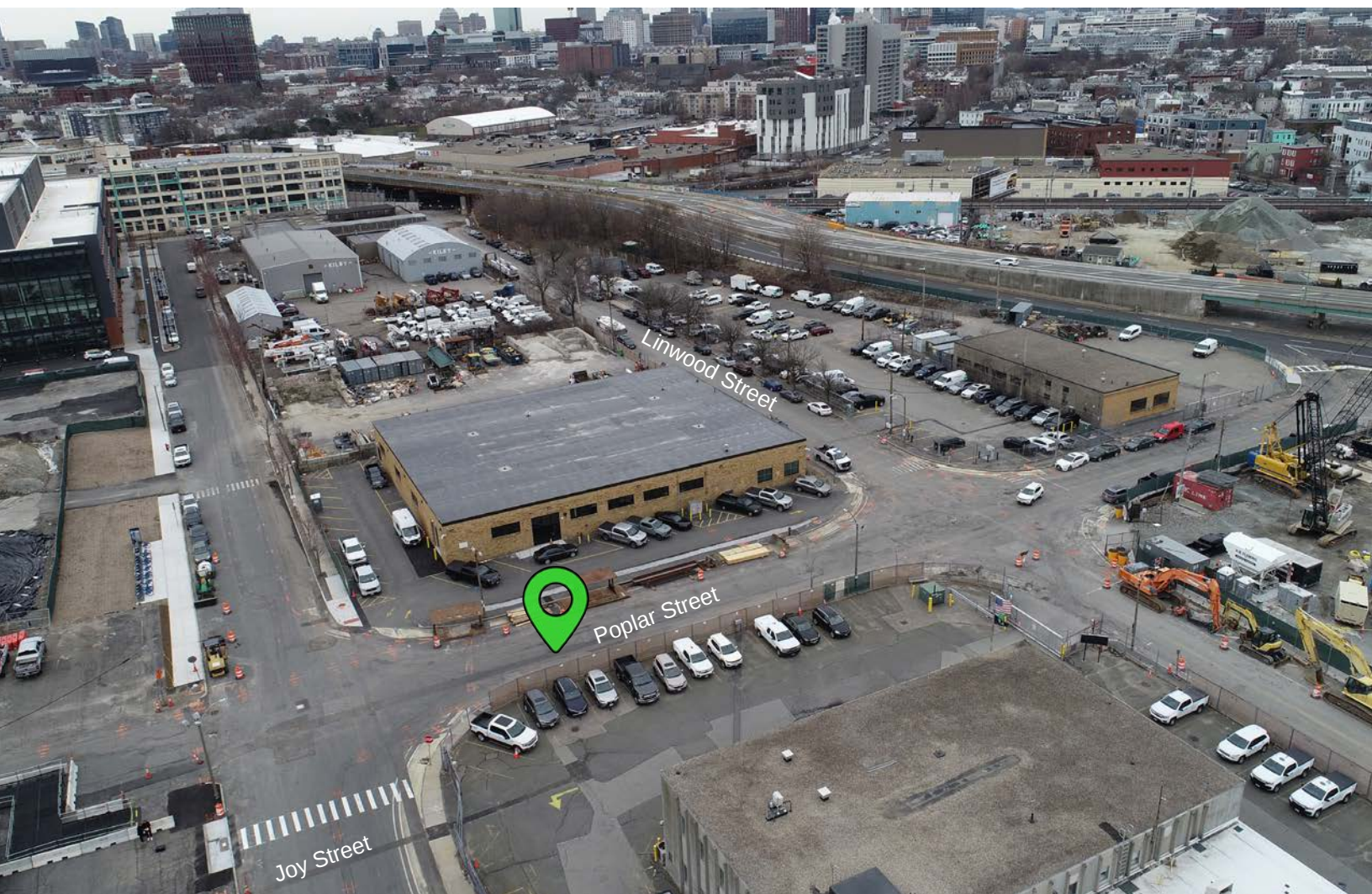
View from the Community Path looking south towards the new Green Line Station. Potential new development along the right-of-way could activate the access ramp from Washington Street.

Area 3: Poplar Street

Poplar Street runs west to east through Brickbottom and will serve as another major gateway into the neighborhood once McGrath Highway is rebuilt and the neighborhood is reconnected to the rest of Somerville. The future extent of Poplar Street is envisioned as a leafy green, arts-oriented main street fronting landscaped public spaces, new buildings with ground floor arts and creative economy uses lining the street, and a new plaza and connection

to the community path at its end. The street should be redesigned to accommodate all users by implementing ample sidewalks with new street trees, separated bike lanes, landscaped stormwater management, and space for outdoor café seating.





View of the current conditions of Poplar Street at its intersection with Joy and Chestnut Streets.

ArtFarm is located at the beginning of Poplar Street. The 2.1-acre site is undergoing transformation into a multi-purpose civic space with landscaping, areas for urban agriculture, performance and exhibit spaces, and the Poplar Street Pump Station. The corner of ArtFarm, near the Poplar & McGrath intersection, is a potential location for public art to mark the entrance to the Brickbottom neighborhood at this location. The landscaped open space of ArtFarm is also an ideal location for an outdoor performance space which could be used for concerts, theater performances, movies in the park, and other artistic demonstrations with the inclusion of a stage or music shell.

The other end of Poplar Street is an ideal location for a new public plaza with pedestrian and bicycle access to the community path and the East Somerville Green Line station. This plaza provides an important visual terminus and a

prominent location for public art. Creation of a new centralized neighborhood park was highly supported by participants of the Brickbottom planning process. A new park along Poplar Street on the existing Eversource parking lot could connect ArtFarm to the proposed new plaza, creating a linear corridor of civic space. This location is an ideal site to host large outdoor community events and recreational activities and to substantially increase tree canopy in the neighborhood.

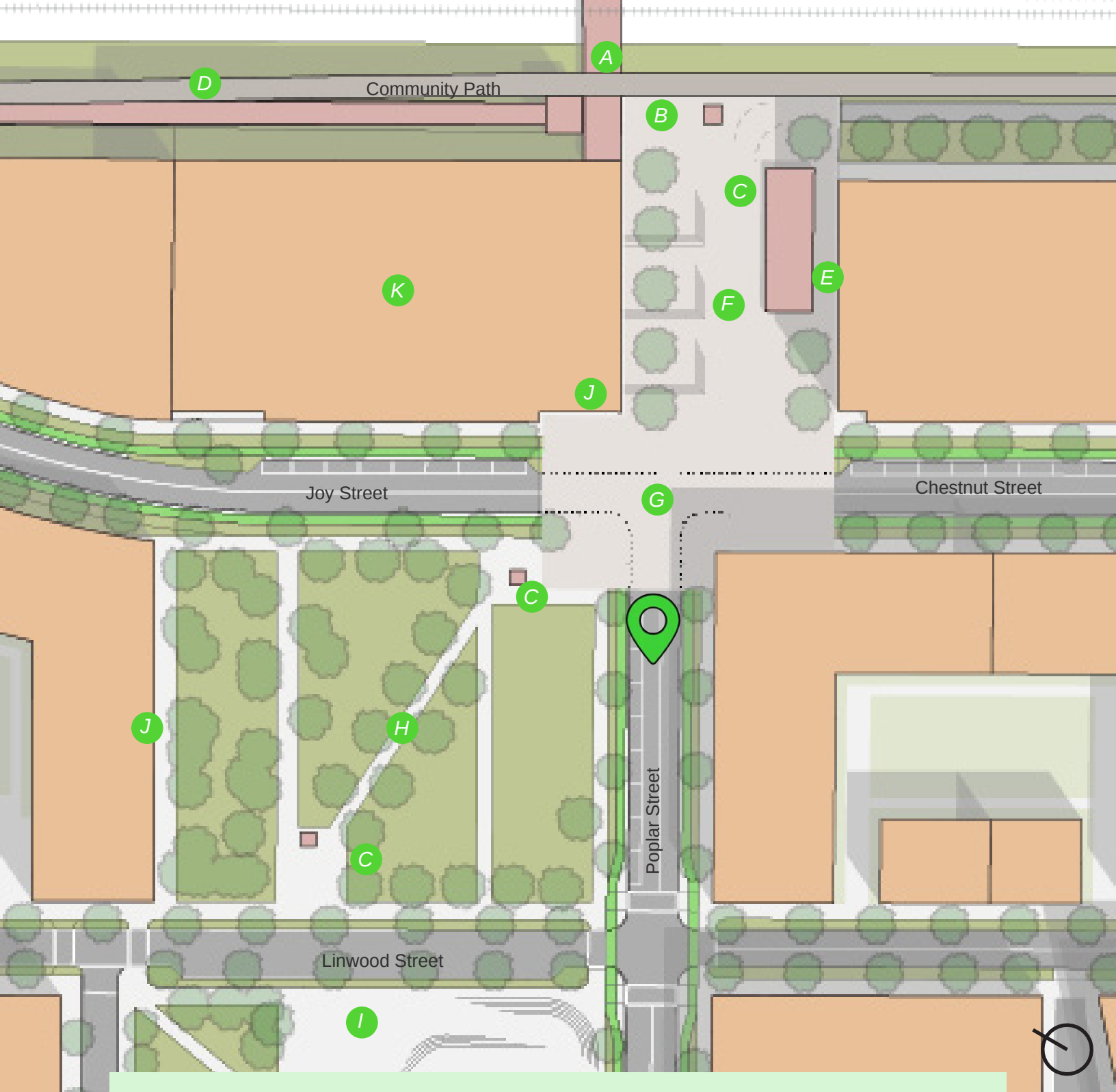
While new construction occurs, the parking areas owned by Eversource along Poplar Street should be activated with temporary structures such as shipping containers converted into small shops for arts & creative uses. These structures could “pop-up” during the warmer months, or they may be associated with special events and activities planned occasionally throughout the year such as the annual Somerville Open Studios.

Short Term Actions

1. Activate Poplar Street with temporary shops and vendors during programmed events.
2. Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new civic space at the end of Poplar Street.
3. Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new neighborhood park along Poplar Street.
4. Require or incentivize ground story Arts & Creative Enterprise uses along Poplar Street.

Long-Term Changes

1. Redesign Poplar Street into a complete street and ensure safe pedestrian crossings interconnect the proposed new civic spaces across Joy and Linden Streets.
2. Include a bandstand, bandshell, or other outdoor music infrastructure in the design of ArtFarm.



Poplar Street Points of Interest and Design Recommendations

- A. Potential new pedestrian bridge to cross over the MBTA tracks and connect to Inner Belt.
- B. Access to the Community Path extension.
- C. Potential location of public art.
- D. Community Path.
- E. MBTA Service Access Road.
- F. New Plaza to serve as gateway space, Poplar Street terminated vista, and space for art. Plaza would need to sort out elevation change up to the MBTA right-of-way.
- G. Raised intersection for traffic calming and to connect open spaces.
- H. New central neighborhood park extending ArtFarm all the way to Joy/Chestnut streets. This space would add approximately one (1) acre of space for more forested and recreational uses.
- I. Completion of ArtFarm.
- J. Active storefronts around parks and plazas.
- K. Terminated vista for the Milk Square/ArtFarm/new park network.



Bird's-eye view of the vision for Poplar Street, ArtFarm, and the potential new open civic space creating a central neighborhood park.



Street level view of the vision for Poplar Street looking towards McGrath Boulevard.



Bird's-eye sketch of the interim vision for the corner of Poplar and Linwood Streets including short-term tactical amenities.



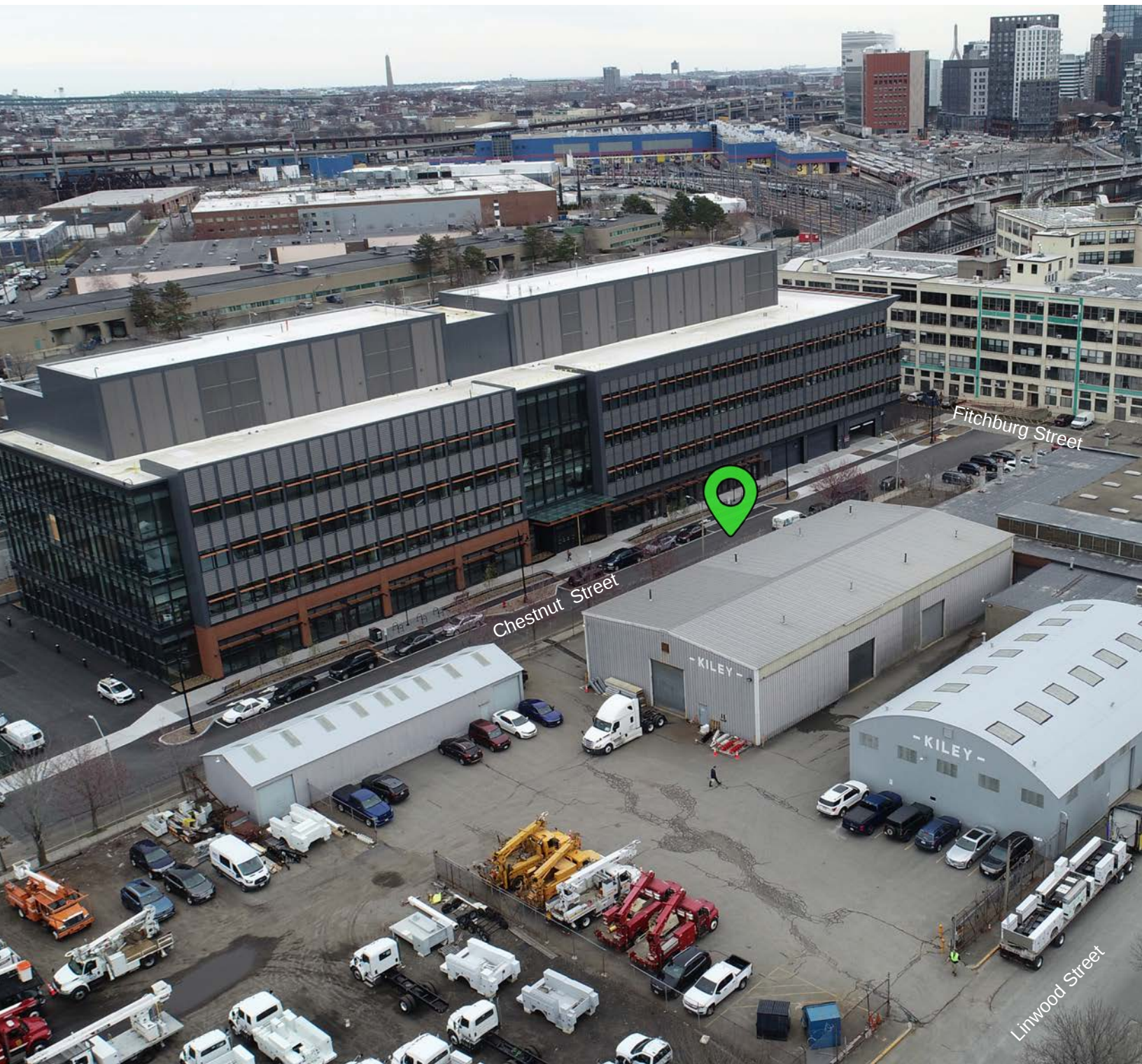
Bird's-eye view of the vision for the corner of Poplar and Linwood Street, with the new civic space to the left and the plaza connecting to the Community Path and the Green Line in the background.

Area 4: Chestnut Street Corridor

The central block between Chestnut Street and Linwood Street should be redeveloped with lower height buildings than what is called for closer to Washington Street and the East Somerville Green Line station. Ground story Arts & Creative Enterprise uses should continue from Poplar Street down Chestnut toward the Brickbottom Artist

Building, the more active uses along Poplar should transition to a less active but a similar arts & creative oriented land use mix located around smaller, more easily walkable blocks.





View of the current conditions of the block between Chestnut and Linwood Streets, with McGrath Highway and Squires Bridge in the background.

To meet the broader urban design and mobility objectives of this plan, Chestnut Street should be redesigned as a complete street with separated bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and new street trees in alignment with the design of Joy Street.

A new public square should be introduced into the middle of the block between Chestnut Street and Linwood Street to help break up the long block, improve the pedestrian experiences, and create new civic space. Food and beverage services or arts & creative enterprises should line the new streets to each side of the space. This new public square would also

be an ideal location for public art and a performance stage.

Development of the commercial building at 100 Chestnut was always intended to include a future civic space to the north end of the building. This is an ideal location for a new pocket plaza with ample outdoor seating that will help break up the long block of buildings backing up against the Community Path. This space provides another opportunity for public art and the sound of a water feature might create a nice respite from the sound of surrounding urbanism like Paley Park or Greenacre Park in New York City.

Alternative

Given land acquisition challenges, several alternatives are suggested for the location of civic spaces in this plan. Implementation will require close collaboration with property owners and the City to deliver the proposed redevelopment possibilities.

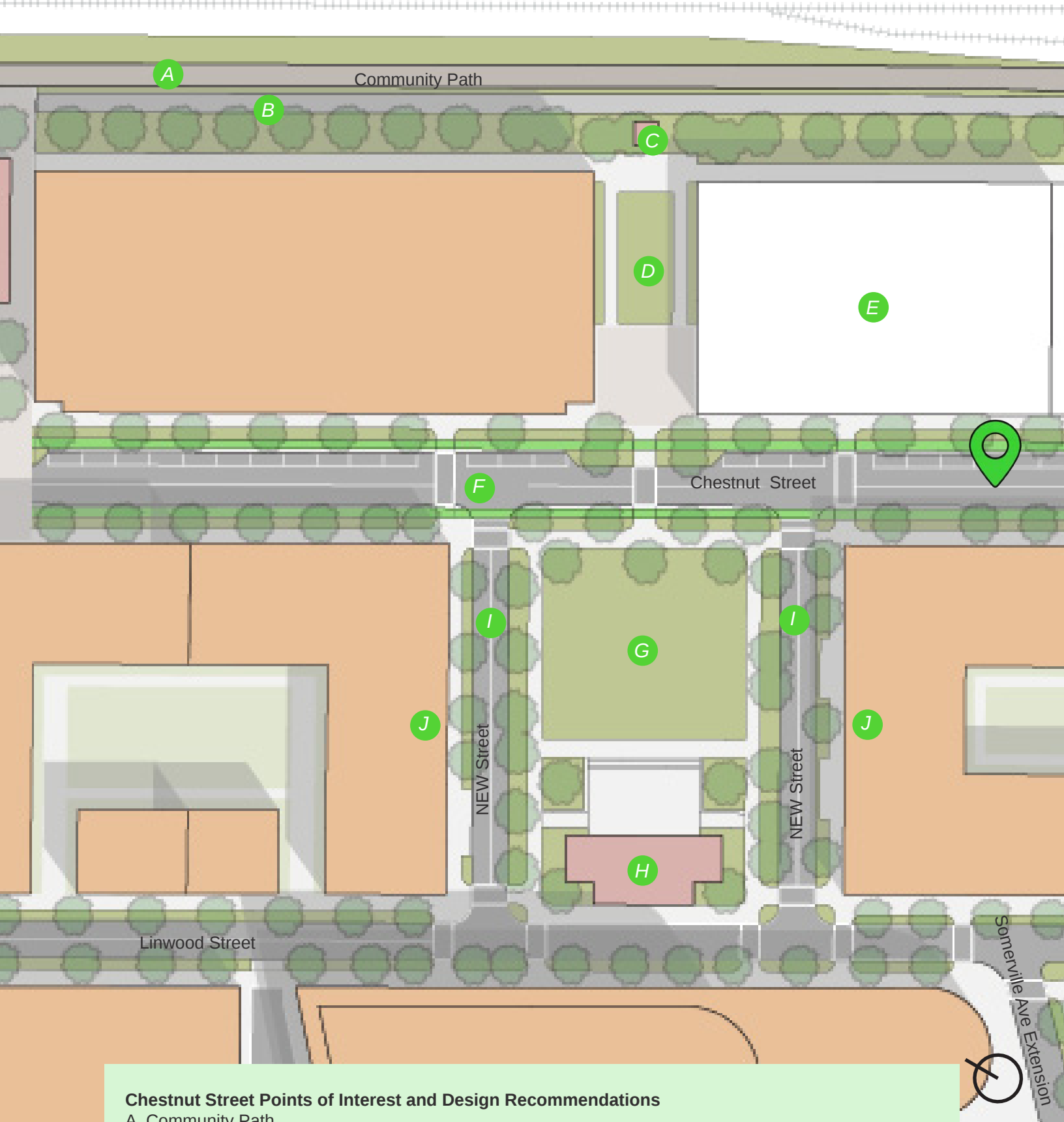
An alternative to the centrally located public square would still introduce a new cross street dividing the block in half, but the new civic space would instead be located at the end of the block abutting Fitchburg Street and Linwood Street. This civic space would take on a different character than the public square, due to its less-intense surrounding land uses and having the space to accommodate more community-oriented civic space uses such as a large dog park, playground, or community garden based on local need.

Short Term Actions

1. Require or incentivize redevelopment to reduce block size by introducing new streets connecting Chestnut Street to Linwood Street.
2. Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new pocket park or plaza between new buildings that back onto the community path.
3. Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new public square or neighborhood park connecting Chestnut Street to Linwood Street.
4. Require or incentivize ground story Arts & Creative Enterprise uses along Chestnut Street.

Long-Term Changes

1. Redesign Chestnut Street into a complete street.

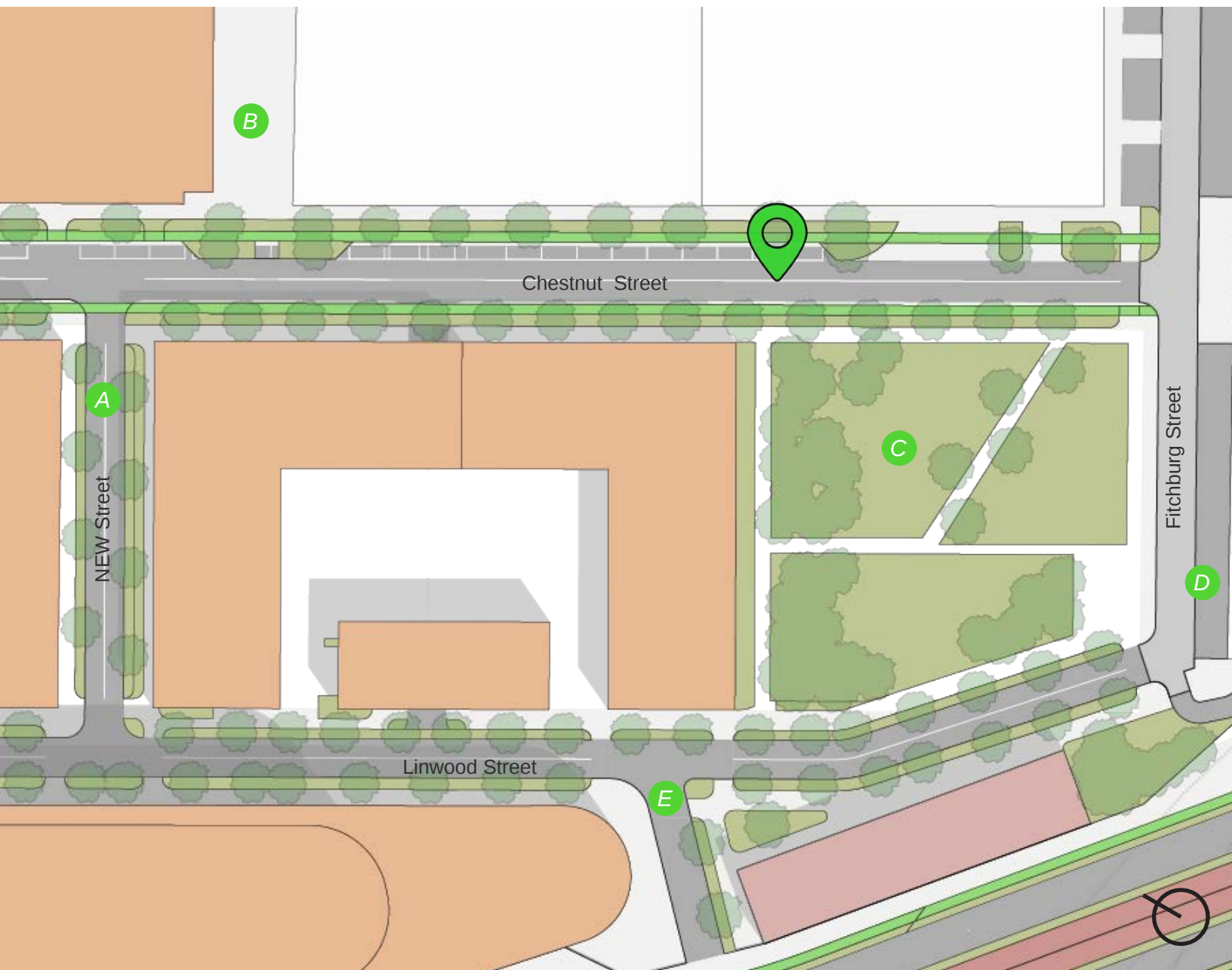


Chestnut Street Points of Interest and Design Recommendations

- A. Community Path.
- B. MBTA Service Road.
- C. Potential location of public art.
- D. Pocket park or plaza between new buildings.
- E. 100 Chestnut development.
- F. New streetscape design for Chestnut Street to include segregated bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and new tree canopy.
- G. New neighborhood park with arts programming and lawn.
- H. Possible performance space.
- I. New thoroughfares to connect Linwood and Chestnut streets.
- J. Active storefronts around parks and plazas.



Bird's-eye view of the vision for the mid-block park between Chestnut and Linwood Streets. The Brickbottom Artist Building can be seen in the background.



Chestnut Street Corridor Design Alternative

- A. No mid-block green space. New thoroughfare between Linwood and Chestnut Streets is maintained.
- B. Pocket plaza.
- C. New neighborhood park at the end of the block of Chestnut/Fitchburg/Linwood Streets.
- D. Fitchburg Street's cobble preserved.
- E. Somerville Ave Extension intersection with Linwood Street.



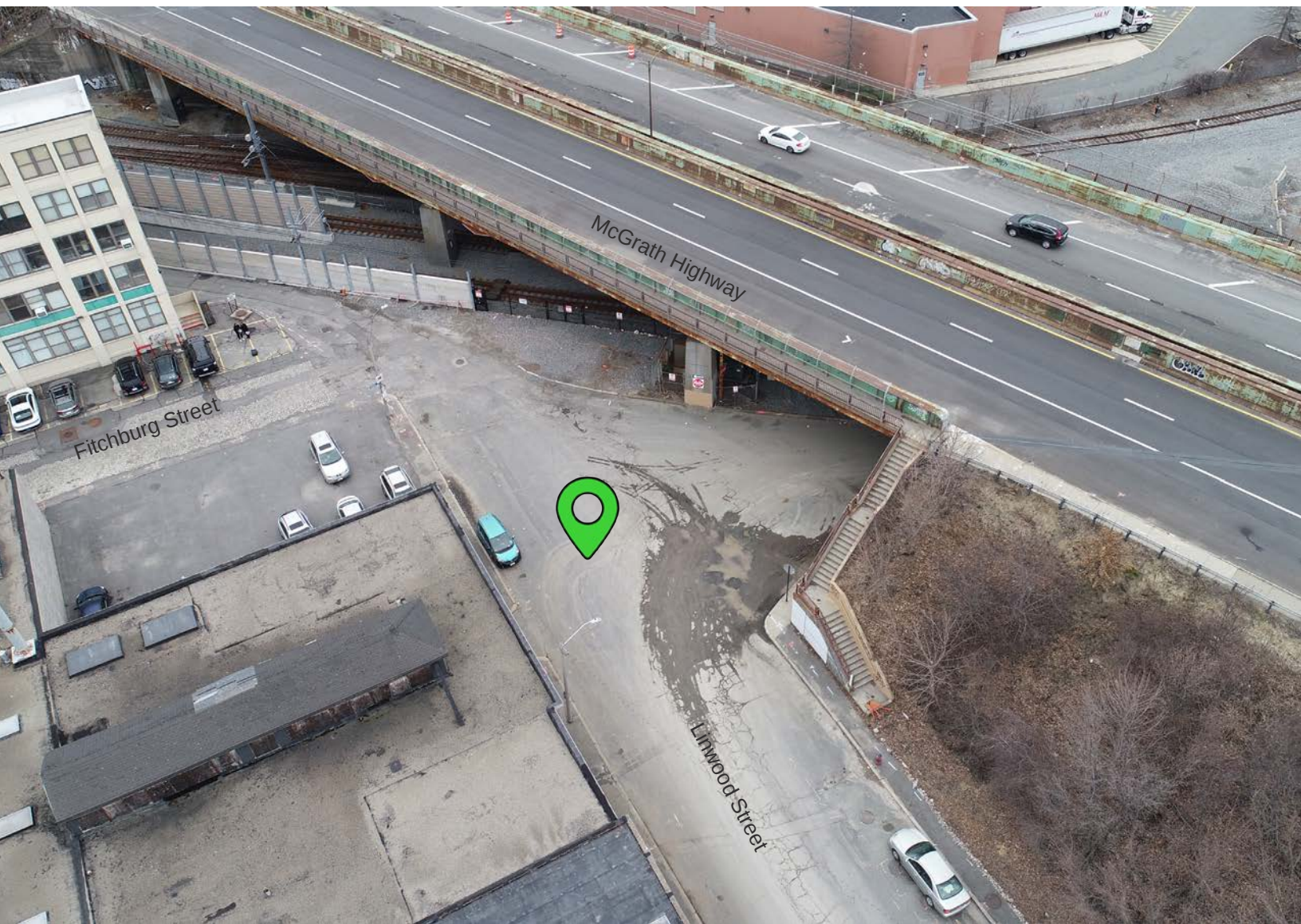
Street level view of Chestnut Street looking north towards Poplar Street.

Area 5: Fitchburg and Linwood Streets

The southernmost corner of Brickbottom along Fitchburg Street is the site of the Brickbottom Artist Building, the only existing residential building in the neighborhood. Fitchburg Street still retains

its old cobblestone pavement, creating a unique area within the neighborhood that should be preserved.





Current view of Fitchburg and Linwood Streets and the intersection of Somerville Ave Extension ("Scary Way") after crossing under Squires Bridge in McGrath Highway. Stairs going up the bridge are visible.

Squires Bridge carries McGrath Highway over the Green Line and commuter rail tracks leading to Union Square at the southern end of Brickbottom. The bridge creates a hard barrier for the neighborhood that will remain in some form even after McGrath is transformed into a multi-modal, urban boulevard. Crossing the bridge from within Brickbottom involves climbing a neglected concrete staircase to reach the bridge's narrow sidewalk.

When the bridge is replaced as part of the Grounding McGrath project, the intersection with Somerville Avenue

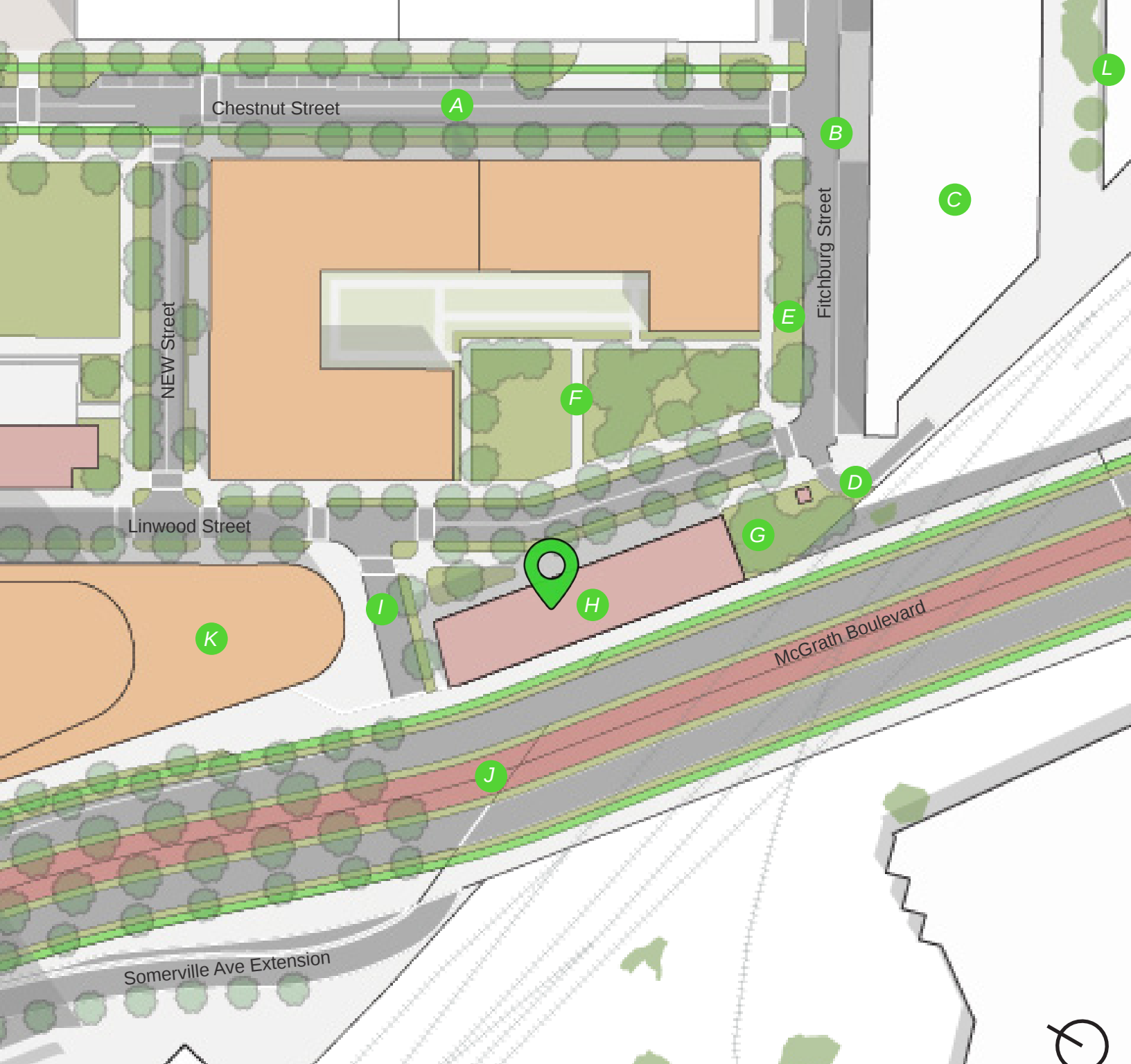
Extension and access up to the Squires Bridge from Brickbottom can be improved. The embankment beside the bridge will likely need to be replaced and will provide additional space for a realignment of Somerville Avenue Extension ("Scary Way") away from the intersection of Linwood Street and Fitchburg Street. This will help to route any automobile traffic away from the Brickbottom Artist Building to the commercial spine of Linwood Street.

Short Term Actions

1. Install interim quick build traffic calming features at the intersection of Linwood and Somerville Avenue Extension.
2. Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new pocket park at the corner of Fitchburg Street and Linwood Street
3. Require or incentivize ground story Arts & Creative Enterprise uses along Linwood Street to the intersection with Poplar.
4. Advocate for MassDOT to improve pedestrian access to Squires Bridge as part of the Grounding McGrath project.

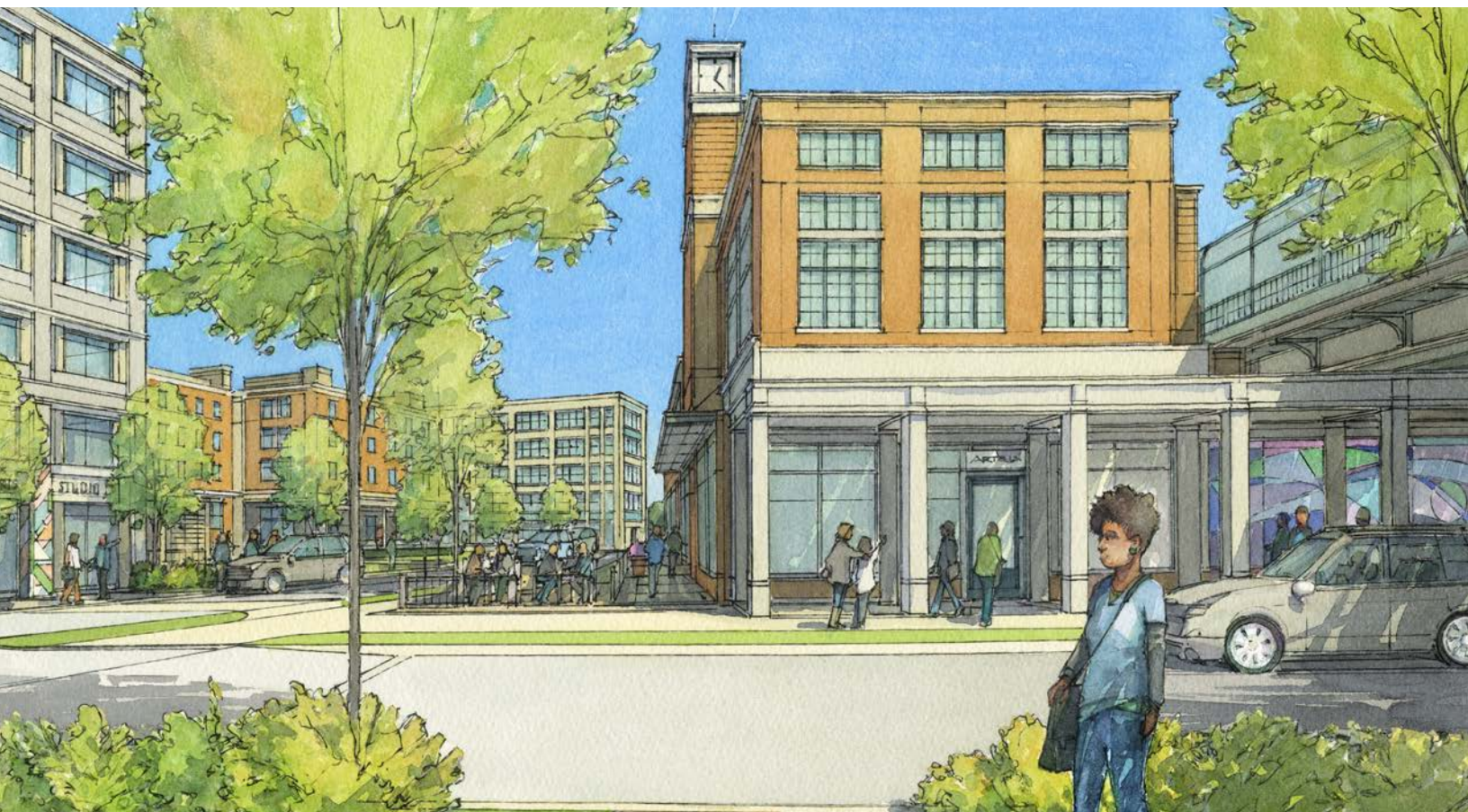
Long-Term Changes

1. Redesign the Linwood and Somerville Avenue Extension ("Scary Way") intersection.
2. Install new stairs and an elevator at Squires Bridge.



Southern Corner Points of Interest and Design Recommendations

- A. New streetscape design for Chestnut Street to include segregated bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and new tree canopy.
- B. Fitchburg cobble pavement preserved.
- C. Brickbottom Artist Building.
- D. Brickbottom Artist Building parking access.
- E. Linear green space to buffer Fitchburg Street.
- F. New park at the corner of Linwood and Fitchburg. Park with space for more intensive green and other recreational uses.
- G. Small green space with public art.
- H. Public stair, elevator, art space and gallery. Stair to climb up Squires Bridge and cross over the MBTA right-of way.
- I. Redesign of the intersection of Linwood Street and Somerville Ave Extension ("Scary Way").
- J. McGrath Boulevard.
- K. Gateway building.



Street level view of the vision for the intersection of Somerville Ave Extension (“Scary Way”) and Linwood Streets.

6. Supplemental

6.1 Fiscal Impact Analysis

6.2 Implementation



6.1 Fiscal Impact Analysis

Fiscal Analysis Model & Scenarios

A fiscal impact analysis projects the financial benefits and costs to the public sector in terms of taxes and other revenues in relation to expenses to provide services. The fundamental question is whether forecasted revenues generated by future growth and development are sufficient to cover forecasted expenditures related to service demands which would result from this same growth and development. The motivation for this fiscal impact analysis at the neighborhood planning level stems from a need to integrate government's costs and revenues with its land use decision making and long-range planning.

A fiscal impact analysis analyzes revenue generation and operating costs to a jurisdiction associated with the provision of public services and capital facilities to serve development. For example: the type of residential units drives the number of people and, therefore, possible school enrollment. Then, this population and school enrollment would drive school operating costs, capital facility needs, and emergency services. On the revenue (income) side, nonresidential development is a key driver for fiscal results due to higher taxes and development fees. The scenarios within this analysis are designed to calculate the city's expenses and revenues for proposed development and evaluate the costs and benefits of alternate land uses, but should reflect market realities as much as possible as well as considering the existing capacities in municipal services and infrastructure.

Scenarios

Long-range planning exercises encourage the city's residents to think big. Therefore, significant infrastructure investments are often required to implement a neighborhood's vision for growth. While fiscal

impacts are only part of a myriad of public decisions, the analysis helps by describing the projected financial costs and benefits as part of a larger discussion of policy. The study begins with the existing conditions and a "no build" assumption - no changes just business continuing as usual within the study area. This provides a baseline of revenue to compare proposed development options against.

The new scenarios are based on the layout and program shown in the draft neighborhood plans as a starting point then some variations are considered. Each initial scenario is predicated on the "full build-out" of the entire study area rather than incremental growth projections since market demands and private property owners control the timeline for any development. The variations or additional scenarios are then created by adjusting the program inputs of land uses and/or capital improvement projects that may be necessary over the approximately 30-year timeline for complete development of a plan area.

The scenarios can vary the land use assumptions quite significantly. While a program of jobs, housing, and amenities is needed to create livable neighborhoods, the economic conditions may not support that balance. So, if the commercial office and lab market slows, then more residential development may occur which could create the need for a new school building as mentioned above. In some areas, more open space acquisition may be necessary for filtration to mitigate extreme flooding, or perhaps that flooding requires large underground storage tanks to manage the stormwater. The scenarios also assume that all expenses of the infrastructure required by a projected development program are borne by the city. In other words, the scenarios are fiscally conservative and assume the most expensive case for the costs to the city.

Brickbottom: Baseline

As mentioned above, the existing conditions in the area were measured and form the financial base line as a point of comparison. The approximate total is 1,377,115 square feet, which includes nearly 400,000 square feet of warehousing uses and approximately 62,000 square feet of parking, would yield a baseline value of \$89,697,810. If this program remains unchanged, the projection in 2030 of a net stabilized revenue-cost, based on annual tax revenues minus the costs associated with use and maintenance, yields \$1,426,353.

Brickbottom: Scenario 1

The first scenario is the full build-out program shown in the draft area plan, which is generally a split between 60% commercial and 40% residential to create a 18-hour neighborhood. The program shows approximately 2,100 residential units, with 702,921 square feet of commercial; and it

assumes purchase and construction of just over 100,000 sf of new civic park space, plus 1,614 linear of new right-of-way for streets.

The analysis of this scenario for a 2030 net stabilized revenue-cost would be \$13,831,806. So even though the upfront development costs would be higher, and the city would need to borrow (bond) the funding for infrastructure, the long-term benefit is significantly greater than the “business as usual” baseline scenario. In addition, if the civic spaces are privately owned public spaces (POPS) with public access in perpetuity, then there will likely be a slight decrease in revenue in the early years due to crediting the construction work provided against the development fees. However, there would be no Capital Improvement Plan investments for land acquisition necessary and only minimal on-going maintenance costs which is advantageous to the city.



Brickbottom: Scenario 2

The second scenario considers the current post-COVID reduced market for employment space and the higher profitability of multi-family residential units. This scenario assumes that a fewer number of buildings are used for commercial office - only 281,000 square feet of employment space - with most of this allocated to “artist & creative” first floor space, not suitable for retail. This scenario provides 3,700 residential units with 20% remaining permanently affordable.

The analysis of this scenario for a 2030 net stabilized revenue-cost would be \$10,513,486. As expected, this scenario is not quite as high as Scenario 1 (60/40 commercial/residential) due to lower revenues generated by residential uses. However, as the region is still in a housing crisis, this scenario would serve city goals of

providing more housing and living options to residents as well as still being a net positive for the fiscal bottom line.

Brickbottom: Scenario 3

The final scenario includes the cost of purchasing land and building a new school, in a different location in the city, to support the increased residential uses that may be in Brickbottom and other Transform areas across the city. Using the residential heavy Scenario 2 as the starting point due to the likely increase in school age children in the potential housing, the cost to acquire land, design, and build a new school reduces the 2030 net stabilized revenue-cost to \$4,662,191.



6.2 Implementation

The following implementation matrix organizes recommendations found throughout this plan discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Each recommendation is accompanied with additional information.

Recommendation	The plans, programs, projects, or policies recommended in this plan.
Time Frame	Categorized as short-term or long-term based on the estimated schedule or time frame necessary for implementation to occur.
Responsible Party	The elected official, board or commission, or City department responsible for planning, implementing, and tracking the recommendations of this plan.
Complexity	Categorized as easy wins or heavy lifts based on the City's ability to deliver the prescribed outcome or if outside partners are necessary for implementation.
Importance	Categorized as critical or left blank based on the priority of the topic for implementation of this plan.
Additional Planning	Identifies the type of additional planning that must be conducted prior to implementation.
Cost	Categorized as low, medium, or high based on the anticipated level of resources, staffing, and time required for implementation.



1. Arts & Culture

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Complexity	Importance	Additional Planning
Short Term				
Ensure that local artists are directly involved in the creation of any future arts district, planning for the district, or representative organization established for the area.	Economic Development Arts Council	easy win		policy
Require or incentivize redevelopment to include no net loss of existing artist studios or artist housing within Brickbottom.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Long Term				
Integrate public art throughout the neighborhood at every opportunity within the public realm, architectural and site design of development, and event programming.	PSUF Mobility Engineering	easy win		
Coordinate a diverse range of activities and cultural events at ArtFarm and throughout the neighborhood to attract visitors and draw further attention to the arts within Brickbottom.	Economic Development Arts Council	heavy lift		
Establish an arts district and adopt a guiding arts district plan to guide further economic and business development of the area.	Economic Development Arts Council	heavy lift	critical	strategic plan
Hire local artists to design and fabricate public art installations, public furniture, and wayfinding or other directional signage.	Economic Development Arts Council	heavy lift		program
Consider designing green infrastructure within the neighborhood as public art.	PSUF Engineering	heavy lift		



2. Economic Development

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Complexity	Importance	Additional Planning
Short Term				
Require or incentivize redevelopment to include one or more Arts Shared Workspace uses that provides multiple individual artist studio spaces.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require or incentivize redevelopment to have active ground story uses along key main streets and civic spaces.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Permit Artisanal Production uses to provide ancillary food and beverage services or retail sales of products customarily associated with the products or goods produced on-site. Encourage such uses to sell other hand-fabricated or hand-manufactured parts and custom or craft consumer goods produced by other local ACE uses.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Provide support to those seeking liscencing for sidewalk cafe seating, outdoor product displays, vending, block parties, or other event permitting.	Economic Development Arts Council	easy win		
Incentivize property owners to activate underused sites with pop-up uses and events.	Economic Development Arts Council	heavy lift		program
Long Term				
Concentrate Arts & Creative Enterprise uses in the eastern side of Brickbottom with a focus on buildings fronting Poplar Street, Linwood Street, Chestnut Street, and the new central park.				
Assist businesses and artists displaced by redevelopment with relocation assistance, preferably so that they remain within Brickbottom.	Economic Development Arts Council	heavy lift		program

3. Land Use and Urban Design

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Complexity	Importance	Additional Planning
Short Term				
Require or incentivize redevelopment to provide at least 20% of commercial floor space to Arts & Creative Enterprise uses.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require or incentivize redevelopment of the neighborhood to create approximately five acres of civic space.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require or incentivize redevelopment of the neighborhood to be at least 40% Residential Housing uses.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require or incentivize redevelopment to break-up existing long blocks into shorter lengths that increase walkability.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require master planned development proposals to identify ideal locations for Arts Exhibition uses, such as music venues, rehearsal space, etc.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require the Review Boards to consider the impacts of building shadows on the access to natural light of neighboring civic spaces and arts & creative uses.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require the Review Boards to consider potential land use conflicts between abutting properties and uses within buildings for proposed master plans.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Assist businesses and artists displaced by redevelopment with relocation assistance, preferably so that they remain within Brickbottom.	Economic Development Arts Council	heavy lift		program
Identify and preserve any historic assets to encourage reuse rather than demolition.	PPZ Historic Preservation Commission City Council	easy win		specific plan



Recommendation	Responsible Party	Complexity	Importance	Additional Planning
Long Term				
Ensure civic spaces are designed to be welcoming to the public so that all visitors are comfortable to sit and stay.	PSUF	easy win		regulation
Create a variety of civic space types spread throughout the neighborhood to meet the various needs of people who live, work and visit Brickbottom.	PSUF Engineering	heavy lift		regulation
Follow the “right tree, right place” methodology of the Urban Forest Management Plan when selecting tree species for planting in civic spaces and as street trees.	PSUF	easy win		policy
Redesign each street to comply with the Complete Streets ordinance and Bike Network Plan.	Mobility PSUF Engineering	heavy lift		specific plan
Plant street trees in redesigned and newly created sidewalks in line with the Urban Forest Management Plan.	PSUF Engineering	easy win		policy
Include green infrastructure within new civic spaces and redesigned streetscape.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation



4. Mobility

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Complexity	Importance	Additional Planning
Short Term				
Collaborate with MassDOT to redesign the Squires Bridge and improved pedestrian access and safety to areas south of Brickbottom.	Mobility Engineering	heavy lift		policy
Install interim, quick-build traffic calming interventions to improve pedestrian safety.	Mobility	easy win		program
Collaborate with the MBTA to implement the Silver Line Extension project connecting Logan Airport and Chelsea to Kendall Square via Sullivan Square and Washington Street.	Mobility MBTA	easy win		
Collaborate with the MBTA to implement the approved Bus Network Redesign plan to ensure routes serve the Brickbottom neighborhood.	Mobility MBTA	easy win		
Establish a parking maximum for redevelopment.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require or incentivize the creation of underground, structured Commercial Parking Facilities.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation



Recommendation	Responsible Party	Complexity	Importance	Additional Planning
Long Term				
Collaborate with MassDOT to redesign McGrath Highway into a multi-modal, pedestrian-friendly urban boulevard.	Mobility Engineering	heavy lift		policy
In addition to the baseline transportation demand management programs and services, new development should provide real-time arrival signage for rail and bus transit serving Brickbottom.	Mobility PPZ City Council			policy regulation
Create new pedestrian and bicycle connections between Brickbottom and the community path, East Somerville Green Line station, and the Inner Belt neighborhood.	Mobility Engineering	heavy lift		specific plan
Remove or consolidate unnecessary curb cuts and connect sidewalks currently interrupted by existing curb cuts.	PPZ Mobility Engineering	heavy lift		policy
Explore the feasibility of an infill Commuter Rail station serving Brickbottom and Inner Belt.	Mobility MBTA	heavy lift		
Establish a Transportation Management Association to serve the Brickbottom neighborhood.	Mobility property owners large employers	heavy lift		



5. Housing

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Complexity	Importance	Additional Planning
Short Term				
Require or incentivize the creation of a variety of dwelling unit sizes to accommodate the diverse household sizes and life stages of Somerville residents at all income levels.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Create a certified artist housing use within the Residential Housing use category in zoning and permit artist housing in Brickbottom.				
Require or incentivize redevelopment to provide a minimum percentage of new residential units as artist housing.				
Require or incentivize redevelopment to provide a minimum percentage of new housing as live-work units.				
Long Term				
Concentrate residential uses within the central block of Brickbottom between Joy/Chestnut Street and Linwood Street and near the East Somerville Green Line Station.				



Key Area 1: Washington Street

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Complexity	Importance	Additional Planning
Short Term				
Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new plaza at the end of Joy Street.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require wide sidewalks along Washington Street.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Long Term				
Redesign the Washington Street and Joy Street intersection.	Mobility Engineering	heavy lift		specific plan
Locate new residential buildings along Washington Street near the East Somerville station of the Green line.	property owners			



Key Area 2: Joy Street

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Complexity	Importance	Additional Planning
Short Term				
Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new greenway or linear park along Joy Street.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Long Term				
Create an access point for pedestrians that connects Joy Street to the East Somerville Green Line Station and the community path.	Mobility Engineering property owners			
Concentrate new residential development along Joy Street near the East Somerville station of the Green Line.	property owners			
Require or incentivize redevelopment to reduce block size by introducing new streets connecting Joy Street to Linwood Street.	Mobility Engineering property owners			
Redesign Joy Street into a complete street.	Mayor City Council Mobility Engineering	heavy lift	critical	specific plan



Key Area 3: Poplar Street

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Complexity	Importance	Additional Planning
Short Term				
Activate Poplar Street with temporary shops and vendors during programmed events.	Economic Development Arts Council	heavy lift		
Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new civic space at the end of Poplar Street.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new neighborhood park along Poplar Street.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require or incentivize ground story Arts & Creative Enterprise uses along Poplar Street.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Long Term				
Include a bandstand, bandshell, or other outdoor music infrastructure in the design of ArtFarm.	PSUF			specific plan
Redesign Poplar Street into a complete street and ensure safe pedestrian crossings interconnect the proposed new civic spaces across Joy and Linwood Streets.	Mayor City Council Mobility Engineering	heavy lift	critical	specific plan



Key Area 4: Chestnut Street

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Complexity	Importance	Additional Planning
Short Term				
Require or incentivize ground story Arts & Creative Enterprise uses along Chestnut Street.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require or incentivize redevelopment to reduce block size by introducing a new street connecting Chestnut Street to Linwood Street.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new pocket park or plaza between new buildings that back onto the community path.				
Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new public square connecting Chestnut Street and Linwood Street.				
Long Term				
Redesign Chestnut Street into a complete street.				



Key Area 5: Fitchburg and Linwood Streets

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Complexity	Importance	Additional Planning
Short Term				
Advocate for MassDOT to improve pedestrian access and safety to Squires Bridge.	Mobility			
Require or incentivize redevelopment to include a new pocket park at the corner of Fitchburg and Linwood.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Require or incentivize ground story Arts & Creative Enterprise uses along Linwood Street to the intersection with Poplar.	PPZ City Council	easy win		regulation
Long Term				
Redesign the Linwood and Somerville Avenue Extension ("Scary Way") intersection.	Mobility Engineering	heavy lift		specific plan
Install new stairs and an elevator at Squires Bridge.	Mobility Engineering	heavy lift		



